

OLD TESTAMENT
HISTORY
HARDWICH & COSTLEY-WHITE



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OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

V

FROM HEZEKIAH TO THE
END OF THE CANON

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY SERIES

Each Volume is intended to provide material for one term's work. The following are some of the chief features of the series :

i. The Narrative is given for the most part in the words of the Authorised Version.

ii. Brief Historical explanations and general commentary are inserted in their proper places.

iii. The chronological order of events has been followed.

iv. Each period is illustrated by reference to contemporary literature (*e.g.* Prophets and Psalms) and monuments.

v. Footnotes are added, but only where difficulties of thought, language, or subject seem to demand explanation.

Vol. I. FROM THE CREATION TO THE CROSSING OF THE
RED SEA.

Vol. II. FROM THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA TO RUTH.

Vol. III. FROM THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL TO THE DEATH OF
DAVID.

Vol. IV. FROM THE ACCESSION OF SOLOMON TO THE END
OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM.

Vol. V. FROM HEZEKIAH TO THE END OF THE CANON.

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

FROM HEZEKIAH TO THE
END OF THE CANON

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PREFACE

THE aim of this book may be stated briefly by saying that it is an attempt to combine the advantages of a general history with those of the ordinary commentary : the former is open to the charge that it does not make the reader familiar with the language of the Bible ; while the latter is too often overloaded with notes, and does not cover sufficient ground.

Practical experience has shown that the Old Testament may conveniently be divided into five periods, each containing enough matter to occupy one school term. Without laying claim to any credit for originality, the editors have tried to keep certain definite aims in view : the chronological sequence of events, the historical setting of the narrative, the use of the words of the Bible wherever possible, and illustrations from the Prophets and other of the Scriptures. Brief footnotes have been added where it seemed necessary.

No attempt has been made in a book of this size to do anything more than simply to record the historical facts as they come. Criticism, comparison, interpretation, the discovery of causes, and the pursuit of them to their subsequent effects—all the fascinating work of the teacher of history in applying the scientific method to his data, in

however small a degree, by which means the pupil's intellectual powers are quickened, has necessarily been left alone. It is possible that time and opportunity may occasionally offer themselves, in the course of a Scripture lesson, for the teacher to exercise his pupils in these respects. The book itself can only supply the material for such exercise ; the rest is beyond its scope.

The only map that it has been thought necessary to include is one of Jerusalem. But frequent reference must be made by the reader of Old Testament history to good maps of Palestine and the surrounding nations, and the editors particularly recommend *Murray's Handy Classical Maps : Palestine*, which includes all that is necessary for this period.

Amongst many books to which reference has been made in the course of their work, the editors would wish to acknowledge especially their obligation to the following : Canon Ottley's *History of the Hebrews*, and *The Hebrew Prophets* ; Dr. Kent's *History of the Hebrew People*, and *Israel's Historical and Biographical Narratives* ; various volumes of *The Cambridge Bible for Schools* ; Stanley's *History of the Jewish Church* ; Farrar's *Minor Prophets* ; and Dr. Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*.

The thanks of the editors are also due to a colleague for his kindness in looking through the proofs and making suggestions.

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iii.	9	Sivan.	June.
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v.	11	Ab.	August.
vi.	12	Elul.	September.
vii.	1	Tishri or Ethanim.	October.
viii.	2	Marcheshvan or Bul.	November.
ix.	3	Chisleu.	December.
x.	4	Tebeth.	January.
xi.	5	Shebat.	February.
xii.	6	Adar	March.

* The “civil” year is the older Hebrew year, which began in autumn. But in early days, before the Exile, the Babylonian calendar, by which the year began in spring, was also in use in Palestine. This calendar was adopted for ritual purposes, and the festivals were arranged according to it. Therefore the year according to this computation is called the “sacred” year.

PART I
FROM HEZEKIAH TO THE CAPTIVITY
727-586 B.C.

INTRODUCTORY

AHAZ : 736-727 B.C

DURING the reign of Ahaz Judah had become the tributary of Assyria in order to protect herself against the attacks of her neighbours, Syria and Israel.

This was done against the advice of Isaiah, who advocated strict political independence.

Fall of the Capitals of Syria and Israel.—The immediate object of the move was achieved, for within a very brief space both Damascus and Samaria had fallen, and Judah had nothing more to fear from those quarters. But such security was bought at a heavy cost ; from this time forwards, for a century, the history of Judah lies in the shadow of the great Assyrian Empire.

From the time when Ahaz substituted for the Brazen Altar the copy of the altar he saw at Damascus, we see the baneful influence of the East over everything : even Hezekiah “ regarded the treasury of the Temple as a sort of reserve fund available for political purposes.”

The social condition of the people of Judah at the beginning of our period is described by Isaiah and Micah, two of that band of prophets who were at once politicians and preachers, and to whose efforts it was chiefly due that the effects of Assyrian influence were less severely

4 INTRODUCTORY. SOURCES OF NARRATIVE

felt by Judah than by other Semitic nations. Isaiah contrasts the luxury of the rich citizens of Jerusalem with the oppression of the poor, on whom fell the burden of the annual tribute paid to Assyria. Micah tells of judicial corruption, commercial dishonesty, and economic ruin in the rural districts, where small holdings were being swallowed up in large estates.

The sources for the first division of our period (Hezekiah to Zedekiah) consist in the main of the books of Kings and Chronicles, and the various contemporary prophets.

The two books of the Kings were probably compiled or edited from earlier available material at the end of the seventh century. They ended at first with Josiah, but later the narrative was brought down to the time of the Captivity. The books of the Chronicles, which were originally combined with Ezra and Nehemiah, were composed at a late date, after the return from the Captivity. In them the history of Israel and Judah is represented as it appeared to men who wrote several centuries after the events described, and who were themselves strongly biassed by all the convictions and prejudices of the "Priestly" age (*vide infra*, p. 151).

An account of the prophets, whose works were recorded and have been preserved, is given below, p. 40 *seq.*

It may be added that one of the Apocryphal¹ books, Tobit, relates the story of an Israelite of Naphtali, who lived in Nineveh, to which he had been carried captive by Shalmaneser; but its historical value is very doubtful. It is thought to have been written late, probably in the second century B.C., with the object of teaching the necessity of burying the dead.

¹ See note, p. 229.

ASSYRIA

The history of the Assyrian Empire reaches back to the dim ages about 2000 B.C. ; but trustworthy facts do not emerge till 1500 B.C.

The empire grew slowly. Shalmaneser I. extended his dominions into Northern Mesopotamia, and in the south deprived Babylonia of some towns, conquests which he celebrated by calling himself " King of the World."

Later came Tiglath-pileser I., who called himself " King of the Four Quarters of the World." His campaigns reached westwards to the Mediterranean, and northwards towards Armenia. Assyria comes into Hebrew history during the reigns of Ahab and Jehu, in the years 854 and 842 B.C. The king at that time was Shalmaneser II., of whose campaigns in Syria and the West we have pictorial representations on the famous " Black Obelisk." Then followed a period of depression, which lasted till the reign of Tiglath-pileser III. Under him Assyria not only recovered lost ground, but spread and organised her dominions into a solid empire. In 732 B.C. he took Damascus, in response to a request from Ahaz, King of Judah, for help against Syria and Israel. His successor, Shalmaneser IV., in 724 B.C. began the siege of Samaria, which was completed

6 INTRODUCTORY. ASSYRIA AND JUDAH

in 722 B.C. by Sargon.¹ Sargon was a very active warrior ; he subdued Armenia, and defeated Merodach-baladan of Babylon, over which he reigned 709-705 B.C. Sargon's son, Sennacherib, is a figure of great importance to the Biblical student in consequence of two expeditions which he undertook in the West. In the first of these, 701 B.C., he took many of the towns of Judah and carried off the inhabitants, thus following the policy which Tiglath-pileser III. had originated, of interchanging the populations of conquered countries. Hezekiah himself was besieged in Jerusalem until he was compelled to buy himself off with a heavy ransom. " Dread of the greatness of my majesty overwhelmed Hezekiah " is Sennacherib's own summary of the facts. The events related by the writer of the Kings, and given below, are probably to be taken as a combination of the campaign of 701 and a later expedition against the Arabians ; and with the Biblical account of the miraculous destruction of the Assyrian army it is interesting to compare the account given in Herodotus (ii. 141). According to this, when Sennacherib approached at the head of a great army of Arabians and Assyrians, Sethon, the priest-king of Egypt, confronted him at Pelusium, on the borders of Egypt, with a miserable army of hucksters. Lack of fighting men was atoned for by the promise of divine help made to him in a dream ; and in the night a host of field-mice attacked Sennacherib's army and devoured their quivers, bows, and the thongs of their shields, so that in the battle which ensued the Egyptians found an easy prey in the defenceless Assyrians. The fact that the mouse was a symbol of pestilence makes it reasonable to suppose that the Hebrew and the Greek stories both refer to the same

¹ The unnamed king of 2 Kings xvii. 6 and xviii. 11.

historical event, the former representing it as the work of "the angel of the Lord."¹

After the death of Sennacherib came troublous times for Assyria. Revolts became frequent in different quarters of the empire. Towards the end of the seventh century B.C. Babylon fell into the hands of Nabopolassar, a Chaldæan, who had been an Assyrian general.

The end came quickly. In the north appeared the terrible Scythians, who had already poured over Asia Minor, and whose invasions inspired terror even as far south as Judah. Finally, in 607 B.C., Nineveh itself was utterly destroyed by the Medes and Nabopolassar of Babylon.

THE REIGN OF HEZEKIAH

727-695 B.C.

The reign of Hezekiah may be divided into two periods, the first marked by prosperity and internal reform, the second by adversity and depression. The chief facts of the reign, as told in the Kings and the Chronicles, are difficult to arrange in any chronological order that will meet with general approval. But we may at least attempt to sketch in outline the history of a man of whose character we are given so vivid an impression by the writers of the Sacred Books, though they deal mainly with a few episodes of his life and pass over the rest in a few lines.

Of his religious reforms we are given many details. It is clear that he attempted to emphasise the importance of

¹ It has been suggested that both the destruction of Sennacherib's army and the disease introduced among the Philistines after the capture of the Ark (1 Sam. v., vi.) were instances of Bubonic Plague, the bacillus of which we now know to be spread by rats and mice.

the Temple and to make it the centre of religious life for the whole kingdom. To effect this he, like many before him, did away as far as he could with local sanctuaries, and destroyed images and the *ashêrim* [A.V. "groves"], or wooden poles, and the stone pillars which the Israelites persistently adopted from the Canaanites. It is mentioned as an interesting fact in this connection that he "broke in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made; for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it; and he called it Nehushtan," *i.e.* the brazen thing. On the other hand, he improved the Temple services. According to various scattered passages, he encouraged both literature and music. In the Book of Proverbs (xxv. 1), it is stated that in his day men "copied out" the proverbs of Solomon.

But apparently his reforms were not thorough enough; at any rate they were soon forgotten, and had to be done all over again by Josiah.

The key to the foreign policy of the reign is to be found in the existence of two parties: one of these, posing as patriots, urged the not unwilling king to throw off the yoke of Assyria; the other saw the folly of this and followed the lead of Isaiah, who, though he had tried to prevent Ahaz from forming an alliance with Assyria, now felt that it would be most dangerous to break it off. Such a course was not justified by the temporary predominance of Judah in Southern Palestine, though it was advocated by the Philistines and their greater neighbour, Egypt, across the desert to the south-west. However, wiser counsels did not prevail. Hezekiah's growing purpose was strengthened by a visit from Merodach-baladan, who himself had revolted from Assyria and made himself king in Babylon.

The course of subsequent events is given clearly in the sacred narrative. The second period of Hezekiah's reign had begun when he ceased to pay the Assyrian tribute.

The relieving features of those years of political and military humiliation are the true patriotism of the great prophet Isaiah, who comforted and encouraged the king, and the piety of Hezekiah himself, who, confessing all his weakness, learnt at last to rely upon Jehovah alone.

STORIES OF HEZEKIAH

(I) HEZEKIAH'S ILLNESS AND RECOVERY, 711 B.C.

2 Kings xx. 1-11

1. In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, set thine house in order ; for thou shalt die, and not live. 2. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, saying, 3. I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. 4. And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 5. Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears : behold, I will heal thee : on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. 6. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years ; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria ; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's

4. Middle court. R.V. middle part of the city.

sake. 7. And Isaiah said, take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.

The miraculous sign.—8. And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day? 9. And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? 10. And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees. 11. And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.

(2) HIS RECEPTION OF THE EMBASSY OF MERODACH-BALADAN, KING OF BABYLON

2 Kings xx. 12-20

The Embassy.—12. At that time Berodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. 13. And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and

9. Degrees. R.V. steps. It is altogether unknown what sort of sun-clock was used in the case of the "dial of Ahaz."

11. Compare the standing still of the sun at the word of Joshua (Jos. x. 12-14).

12. Berodach-baladan, more correctly Merodach-baladan. He reigned in Babylon from 721 to 709 B.C., when he was expelled by Sargon, and again for a few months in 702, at the end of which he was defeated by Sennacherib. His embassy to Palestine took place in 711, when he was seeking allies in the west.

all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures : there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.

Isaiah rebukes Hezekiah.—14. Then came Isaiah the prophet unto King Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men ? and from whence came they unto thee ? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, even from Babylon. 15. And he said, What have they seen in thine house ? And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in mine house have they seen : there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them. 16. And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD. 17. Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon : nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. 18. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away ; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. 19. Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days ?

[*Hezekiah's conduit.*—20. And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they

20. a pool, and a conduit. The object of these was to supply Jerusalem with water during a siege. It was probably Hezekiah's work that was discovered in 1880, viz. a tunnel through the rock connecting the Fountain of the Virgin, in the Kidron Valley, with the Pool of Siloam, in the Tyropœon ravine. It is 1,706 feet long. An inscription was found, relating how the workmen, excavating from opposite ends, met in the middle.

20. **chronicles** : these are the official records which the compilers of the Books of Kings and Chronicles used, with other documents, for their work.

not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah ?]

(3) THE INVASION OF SENNACHERIB, 701 B.C.

2 Kings xviii. 13—xix. 37

13. Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.

Hezekiah pays tribute to Assyria.—14. And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended ; return from me : that which thou puttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. 15. And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house. 16. At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

The Siege of Jerusalem.—17. And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rab-shakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit

13. *fourteenth year.* According to one theory, with which this verse would agree, Hezekiah's reign began in 715 B.C., and ended in 686.

14. *Lachish.* On the site of this town, which lies about 20 miles east of Gaza, on the edge of the Shephelah, have been found the remains of eight cities, the earliest of which dates back to 1700 B.C.

talents. The value of the ancient Hebrew talents of silver and gold has been estimated at £410 and £6,150 respectively.

17. *Tartan and Rabsaris and Rab-shakeh,* names denoting high officials, viz. commander-in-chief, chief chamberlain, and chief captain.

of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field.

The Conference.—18. And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder. 19. And Rab-shakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? 20. Thou sayest, (but they are but vain words,) I have counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? 21. Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him. 22. But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?

Sennacherib's Envoys urge submission to Assyria.—23. Now, therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. 24. How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? 25. Am I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it. 26. Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rab-shakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants

23. give pledges, etc. *I.e.* you are so feeble that, as we wager, you could not provide men to mount 2000 horses!

in the Syrian language ; for we understand it : and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall. 27. But Rab-shakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words ? hath he not sent me to the men which sit on the wall ?

And address the people.—28. Then Rab-shakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria : 29. Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you : for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand : 30. neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. 31. Hearken not to Hezekiah : for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me, and then eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern : 32. until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die : and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. 33. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria ? 34. Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad ? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah ? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand ?

26. Syrian language : see note on " the tongue of the Chaldeans." p. 72.

31. Make . . . present. R.V. make your peace with me.

34. Hamath, on R. Orontes. Arpad, north-west of Aleppo. Sepharvaim, on R. Euphrates, near Baghdad. Hena, Ivah, doubtful names.

Assyrian contempt of Jehovah.—35. Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand? 36. But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not. 37. Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rab-shakeh.

Hezekiah consults Isaiah.—xix. 1. And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. 2. And he sent Eliakim, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz. 3. And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. 4. It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left. 5. So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

Isaiah's reply.—6. And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. 7. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

Sennacherib's Letter to Hezekiah.—8. So Rab-shakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish. 9. And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying, 10. Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. 11. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered? 12. Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezep, and the children of Eden which were in Thelasar? 13. Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah?

Hezekiah prays in the Temple.—14. And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. 15. And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even

8. Libnah, About 14 miles north of Lachish, just on the edge of the Shephelah.

9. Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia. It has been suggested that Tirhakah the Ethiopian, who did not become king of Egypt till 691, was at this time, 701, high priest of Ptah [=Sethon, priest of Hephæstus; see above, p. 6], and governor of Memphis. This reconciles the Scripture narrative with known historical facts.

12. Gozan, in the centre of North Mesopotamia.

Haran, north-west of Mesopotamia. Abram came here after leaving Ur of the Chaldees; and Crassus was defeated here [Carrhae] in 53 B.C.

Rezep, between Palmyra and the Euphrates.

Thelasar. Read "the children of Eden which are in Telassar," i.e. east of the Tigris.

thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth ; thou hast made heaven and earth. 16. LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear : open, LORD, thine eyes, and see : and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God. 17. Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands, 18. and have cast their gods into the fire : for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone : therefore they have destroyed them. 19. Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only.

Jehovah answers his prayer.—20. Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard. 21. This is the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him ;

Poem : the words of Jehovah.—The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn ; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

22. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed ? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high ? even against the Holy One of Israel.

23. By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, “ With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the

21–28. These verses form a poem : vv. 21–23 represent Jerusalem as laughing in contempt of Sennacherib, who boasts of his conquests from Lebanon to Egypt, vv. 23, 24. Vv. 25–28, Jehovah utters his verdict against the blasphemous enemy of His people.

21. The tenses should be present.

23. The tenses should be past and perfect. “ I ” = Sennacherib.

sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof : and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and into the forest of his Carmel.

24. I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places."

25. Hast thou not heard long ago how I have done it, and of ancient times that I have formed it ? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldst be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps.

26. Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded ; they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the house tops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up.

27. But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.

28. Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

The message of Isaiah.—29. And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same ; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof. 30. And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. 31. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and

25. Jehovah says in effect : " I fore-ordained all that you are doing : it is by My will that it is your task [A.V. be to lay waste] to conquer nations."

they that escape out of mount Zion : the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this. 32. Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. 33. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. 34. For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

Destruction of the Assyrian army.—35. And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand : and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. 36. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. 37. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword : and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

MANASSEH AND AMON

Hezekiah's political experiment failed, as we have seen, and Judah continued to pay tribute to Assyria.

Manasseh's long reign and the two short years of his son Amon are represented as a period in which Judah fell lower than she had ever fallen before since the division of the two kingdoms. The religious reforms of Hezekiah were entirely blotted out. Isaiah's promises, it appeared, had not been fulfilled, and there was a terrible reaction. According to tradition, Isaiah himself was put to death.

Though the worship of Jehovah continued, it was combined with the worship of the old Canaanite gods and the worship of "the host of heaven" from Assyria.

Human sacrifice was permitted, and there was a great persecution, presumably of the faithful minority who protested against the defilement of the religion of their fathers. The story which the Chronicler tells of the repentance of Manasseh must probably be rejected. Amon followed in Manasseh's footsteps, and perished at the hands of conspirators, after reigning two years.

MANASSEH

c. 695-641 B.C.

2 Kings xxi. 1-16

1. Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzi-bah. 2. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

Manasseh's Idolatry.—3. For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. 4. And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name. 5. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. 6. And he

3. a grove. R.V. an Ashêrah, *i.e.* a sacred wooden pillar or pole; *cp.* the English May-pole and its original significance.

6. made . . . fire. He offered human sacrifice in the valley of Hinnom, which Josiah afterwards defiled.

observed times. R.V. practised augury: *e.g.* no important business would be undertaken if the omens were unlucky.

made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. 7. And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever: 8. neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them. 9. But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel.

The doom of Judah pronounced.—10. And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying, 11. Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: 12. therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. 13. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down. 14. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance,

11. *Amorites.* Here means the Canaanites generally, the original inhabitants of Palestine.

13. *line . . . plummet.* The instruments of a builder which enable him to see that the horizontal and perpendicular lines of a wall are perfectly true.

and deliver them into the hand of their enemies ; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies ; 15. Because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day. 16. Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another ; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.

THE REIGN OF JOSIAH

For the first ten years of Josiah's reign everything went on as it had been under his two predecessors : but, as soon as the young king felt himself strong enough to take the government into his own hands, he began a great reformation which was more complete than any of those that his ancestors had undertaken.

First of all, with the help of Hilkiah the priest, the Temple was restored ; and it was while this was being done that " the book of the law " was found—an event of far-reaching importance. It is generally considered that by this book is meant part of the Book of Deuteronomy ; and it has been supposed that it was written during the reign of Manasseh.

After the reading of this book to the people and a renewal of the Covenant between Jehovah and the Nation, the great religious reformation was begun in Jerusalem and throughout the neighbourhood, as far north as Bethel ; here was found the tomb of the prophet who had foretold to Jeroboam I. of Israel the coming of Josiah and the destruction of the altar (1 Kings xiii.). The most

important result of the reformation was the position occupied in future by the Law, to which such little reference appears to be made in all the earlier narrative. Henceforward, as the kingdom rapidly declines and then vanishes, the Law takes its place as the chief expression of Jehovah's will: and the long years of exile gave the Jews plenty of time to think about it and reduce it to the form of a permanent code.

The battle of Megiddo, at which Josiah lost his life, is interesting as one of many examples of the difficulties forced upon Palestine by her geographical position on the high-road between East and West: Judah, especially at this time, was a buffer state between Egypt and her eastern neighbours, and as such she suffered.

Josiah met his fate while trying as a faithful ally of Assyria to intercept Pharaoh-necho II.; for the Egyptian king wanted to take advantage of Assyria's weakness. The nations of Western Asia were in a state of chaos owing to the invasions of the Scythians and the rise of Babylon. A year after Megiddo Nineveh actually fell: but only two years later, 605 B.C., Necho himself was defeated by Nebuchadrezzar.

EPISODES IN THE REIGN OF JOSIAH

I. THE REPAIRING OF THE TEMPLE AND THE DISCOVERY OF THE BOOK OF THE LAW

2 Kings xxii. 3—xxiii. 2

Instructions for the repairing of the Temple.—xxii. 3. And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the LORD,

saying, 4. Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the LORD, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people : 5. and let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD : and let them give it to the doers of the work which is in the house of the LORD, to repair the breaches of the house, 6. unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house. 7. Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.

Finding of "The Book of the Law."—8. And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. 9. And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD. 10. And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. 11. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.

Josiah enquires about it.—12. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and

8. the book of the law. As is generally agreed, this must have been part of the Book of Deuteronomy. Possibly it had been compiled during Manasseh's long reign : at any rate Josiah's reformation seems to have been based upon it.

Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying, 13. Go ye, enquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found : for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us. 14. So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe ; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college ;) and they communed with her.

The answer of Huldah the Prophetess.—15. And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me, 16. Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read : 17. because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands ; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched. 18. But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, As touching the words which thou hast heard ; 19. because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants

14. wardrobe, *i.e.* the robes for the priests.

college. R.V. "in the second quarter," a division of the city. According to Sayce, Moriah, in the north-east corner of Jerusalem, was divided into (1) the "upper" or "first city," to the south-east, and (2) the "second city," to the north-west, of which the word "college" is a mistranslation.

thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me ; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD. 20. Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace ; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.

The public reading of the Book.—xxiii. 1. And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. 2. And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great : and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD.

2. THE RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT, AND THE GREAT RELIGIOUS REFORMATION

2 Kings xxiii. 3-28

The Covenant.—3. And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.

Josiah puts down idolatry.—4. And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of

20. in peace. As a fact, Josiah came to a violent end ; but he did not live to see the evil times into which Judah was to fall.

heaven : and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel.

5. And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem ; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven. 6. And he brought out the grove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people. 8. And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on a man's left hand at the gate of the city. 9. Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren.

The destruction of foreign cults.—10. And he defiled

8. Geba to Beersheba, *i.e.* all Judah, just as " Dan to Beersheba " describes the combined kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

high places . . . gate of the city. The explanation of this passage is doubtful.

High places : note that these were approved of by Samuel and many kings, *e.g.* Asa, and by Elijah himself. Later it was thought wise to centralise national worship ; and so the editors of the Kings, and still more so the editors of the Chronicles, regarded as a sin what was originally legitimate.

10. Topheth. The exact meaning of Topheth, and the position of the valley of Hinnom, are still uncertain, but they probably were south-west of the city. This valley, Gehenna, where hence-forwards could be seen fires burning night and day, destroying the refuse of Jerusalem, is referred to metaphorically by our Lord as the final abode of the wicked.

Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech. 11. And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire. 12. And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron. 13. And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile. 14. And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men.

Josiah at Bethel.—15. Moreover the altar that was at

Molech or Moloch was a deity worshipped under various kindred names by all Semitic peoples, but especially by the Ammonites. Children were sacrificed to him even by the Israelites.

11. **sun.** The worship of the sun probably came from Babylonia; it is reckoned a capital offence by Deuteronomy.

13. **Ashtoreth** = Greek Astartē, a Phœnician goddess, a nature deity whose cult came originally from Assyria and the East.

Chemosh, *cp.* 2 Kings iii. 27, where the Moabite king offered his son as a sacrifice, no doubt to the national god.

Milcom = Molech: see on v. 10 above.

14. **bones of men.** Thus, according to ideas which have prevailed amongst all nations, making it impossible ever to perform religious rites there again.

15. **Bethel.** On the southern border of the defunct kingdom of Israel. Jeroboam I. had set up a Golden Calf at Bethel to prevent

Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove. 16. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. 17. Then he said, What title is that that I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel. 18. And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria. 19. And all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the LORD to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel. 20. And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem.

Josiah's Reforms.—21. And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant. 22. Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah;

his subjects being tempted to go to Jerusalem for the Temple services (1 Kings xii. 26–29). For the episode of the “man of God out of Judah,” whose tomb Josiah found, and his prophecy of the events here related, see 1 Kings xiii. 1–32.

23. but in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, wherein this passover was holden to the LORD in Jerusalem. 24. Moreover the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD. 25. And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses ; neither after him arose there any like him.

26. Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal. 27. And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there. 28. Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah ?

3. JOSIAH'S DEATH AT THE BATTLE OF MEGIDDO, 608 B.C.

2 Kings xxiii. 29, 30

Josiah's death.—29. In his days Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates : and king Josiah went against him ; and

29. **Megiddo.** An important strategic town commanding the Plain of Esdraelon ; an army posted here could intercept any one trying to pass along the main route northwards through the Plain of Dothan. This road Pharaoh-necho was obliged to take in order to reach Assyria. Here Barak defeated Sisera and the Canaanites (Judges v. 19-21).

he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him. 30. And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.

THE BABYLONIAN EMPIRE

The founder of the new Babylonian Empire was Nabopolassar, who in a reign of twenty years established his kingdom on a firm foundation. After revolting from the now feeble Assyria he and his allies cleared the Assyrians out of the cities of Babylonia and conquered Mesopotamia. In 607 Nineveh itself fell before him, and two years later his son, Nebuchadrezzar, [= Nebuchadnezzar] won the battle of Carchēmish, where he encountered Pharaoh-necho II. of Egypt. One of the results was that Jehoiakim of Judah became a tributary of Babylon, whose sway now extended to Southern Palestine.

Not long after this battle Nebuchadrezzar succeeded to the throne. It was he who made Babylon one of the wonders of the world, with its impregnable fortifications, magnificent temples, and over-hanging gardens. He continued his career of conquest in all directions. When Zedekiah of Judah ceased to pay tribute, he besieged and took Jerusalem, 586 B.C., carried off the greater part of the population, and made Judah a Babylonian province. In the same way all the surrounding country fell into his hands, including Phoenicia, Ammon, Moab and Edom. His war with the Arabs of Kedar is referred to by Jeremiah (xlix. 28-33). Of Nebuchadrezzar's successors we may

notice his son, Evil-merodach, who let out of prison Jehoiachin of Judah, and Nabonidus. The latter was more devoted to antiquarian lore and to building than to the cares of governing : so his son, the Belshazzar of the Bible, ruled for him in Babylon. Meanwhile Cyrus of Persia was increasing his power in the east, and in 538 B.C. the independent empire of Babylonia came to an end with Cyrus' capture of Babylon.

THE END OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH

The death of Josiah at Megiddo had consequences fatal for Judah : the country at once relapsed into idolatry and a state of moral degradation to which the prophets bear abundant witness ; and between Egypt and Babylonia on either hand the life of the nation was crushed out of existence.

It is the saddest period of her history, and is associated with the saddest of the great prophets, Jeremiah, who, like Cassandra, told his unwilling hearers what to expect, but was not believed.

The reign of Jehoahaz was as short as it was evil : he was carried off by Necho II. and imprisoned in Egypt. But the ambitions of Egypt were checked at the battle of Carchemish, and after this she took no further part in eastern politics, except as a malign influence in the background by which a party in Judah was impelled to resist the overpowering superiority of Babylon.

For three years Jehoiakim paid tribute to Nebuchadrezzar ; but he was persuaded to revolt, and was immediately

punished by the invasion of a mixed army of Babylonians and troops from Syria and the surrounding country. At this point he died, and was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin, who was besieged in Jerusalem by Nebuchadrezzar himself, and was carried into captivity, together with the best fighting men of the nation and much of the Temple treasure, 597 B.C.

It may be noted here that the reference in the first verse of Daniel to the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadrezzar in the third year of Jehoiakim's reign does not seem to be supported by historical evidence.

The reign of Zedekiah, who was left to rule over the remnant of the people, is a melancholy tissue of political intrigues, with the one clear figure of Jeremiah standing alone, urging the only possible course—implicit obedience to Babylon.

But Zedekiah rebelled, trusting in Egypt the broken reed, and Jerusalem was once more besieged and taken by Nebuchadrezzar, 586 B.C., and practically all the remainder of the people were deported. The poorest only were left behind, under the governorship of Gedaliah: but even they were not left undisturbed; a faction was formed by one Ishmael, who made a conspiracy and murdered Gedaliah; and then, in fear of punishment at the hands of the Babylonians, they fled to Egypt, taking with them the prophet Jeremiah.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF JUDAH

(I) THE REIGN OF JEHOAHAZ, 608 B.C.

2 Kings xxiii. 31-34

31. Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jeru-

salem. 32. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done. 33. And Pharaoh-nechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem ; and put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold. 34. And Pharaoh-nechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away ; and he came to Egypt, and died there.

(2) REIGN OF JEHOIAKIM, 607-597 B.C. .

2 Kings xxiii. 35—xxiv. 4

35. And Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh ; but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh : he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give it unto Pharaoh-nechoh. 36. Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign ; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. 37. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done.

Babylonian Invasions.—xxiv. 1. In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years : then he turned and rebelled against him. 2. And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the

33. Riblah, not far from the R. Orontes, between Damascus and Hamath. Pharaoh-necho II., who had defeated Josiah at Megiddo in 608, now deposes one of Josiah's sons, and puts his elder brother on the throne : soon after, in 605, he is himself defeated by Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish.

word of the LORD, which he spake to his servants the prophets. 3. Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did ; 4. and also for the innocent blood that he shed ; for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood ; which the LORD would not pardon.

(3) REIGN OF JEHOIACHIN, 597 B.C. : THE FIRST CAPTIVITY

2 Kings xxiv. 6-14

6. So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers ; and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead. 7. And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land : for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt. 8. Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. 9. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done.

Siege of Jerusalem.—10. At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. 11. And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. 12. And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers : and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.

13. *First Captivity.*—And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of

7. king of Egypt., etc., i.e. after the battle of Carchemish, in 605 B.C.

the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. 14. And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land.

THE DOWNFALL OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH

(1) THE REIGN OF ZEDEKIAH, 597–586 B.C.

2 Kings xxiv. 17—xxv. 7

Rebellion of Zedekiah.—17. And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah. 18. Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 19. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. 20. For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

Siege of Jerusalem.—xxv. 1. And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about. 2. And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. 3. And on the ninth day of the fourth

14. The prophet Ezekiel was one of the priests carried to Babylon with Jehoiachin.

month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land.

Punishment of Zedekiah.—4. And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain. 5. And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him. 6. So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him. 7. And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass and carried him to Babylon.

(2) THE SECOND CAPTIVITY, AND THE DESTRUCTION OF
THE TEMPLE, 586 B.C.

2 Kings xxv. 8-17

Fall of Jerusalem.—8. And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: 9. And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. 10. And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about. 11. Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away

4. *Chaldees.* The Chaldæans, *i.e.* Babylonians and other troops from the East,

to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carry away. 12. But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.

The Temple plundered.—13. And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that was in the house of the Lord, did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon. 14. And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away. 15. And the firepans, and the bowls, and such things as were of gold, in gold, and of silver, in silver, the captain of the guard took away. 16. The two pillars, one sea, and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the Lord; the brass of all these vessels was without weight. 17. The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the chapter upon it was brass: and the height of the chapter three cubits; and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapter round about, all of brass: and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work.

(3) THE GOVERNORSHIP OF GEDALIAH, 586 B.C.

2 Kings xxv. 22-26

22. And as for the people that remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over them he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, ruler. 23. And when all the captains of

13. pillars of brass. Jachin and Boaz, made by Hiram, the brass founder: they stood in the Porch.

bases supported the lavers, and, with the "brassen sea," a great brass bason, stood in the inner court before the Temple,

17. chapter, *i.e.* capital.

the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah,⁴ even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Careah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. 24. And Gedaliah swore to them, and to their men, and said unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon; and it shall be well with you.

25. *Conspiracy of Ishmael, and the flight to Egypt.*—But it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah. 26. And all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose, and came to Egypt: for they were afraid of the Chaldees.

(4) THE SUBSEQUENT RELEASE OF KING JEHOIACHIN, 561 B.C.

2 Kings xxv. 27-30

27. And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison; 28. and he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon; 29. and changed his prison garments; and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of

25. For a fuller account of the conspiracy of Ishmael, see Jer. xl. 13—xli. 15.

his life. 30. And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.

THE PROPHEETS

All the prophets whose written work has come down to us, except two, Amos and Hosea, lived within the limits of the years covered by this book. Six of them belong to our first period, 727-586 B.C. In order that their connection with contemporary history may be seen at a glance, they may be arranged in chronological order thus:

PROPHETS.	REIGN.	DATE.
Isaiah ..	Hezekiah ..	{ Last part of eighth century
Micah ..		
Zephaniah ..	Josiah ..	{ Seventh Century, before the fall of Nineveh
Nahum ..	doubtful ..	
Habakkuk...	? Jehoiakim ..	c. 600 B.C.
Jeremiah ..	Josiah to Zedekiah	Last part of seventh and beginning of sixth centuries.

The prophets constitute at once the glory and the peculiarity of Hebrew history: without some knowledge of them it is impossible to understand even dimly what it was that made the Jews great and enabled them to impress themselves as they have done on the history of the western world. It is proposed therefore to discuss each separately as briefly as possible, and then to give extracts which from their substance and literary interest will give the

reader some clue to the character of the writers, their views, and their work.

ISAIAH

The importance of Isaiah as the adviser and friend of Hezekiah can be clearly seen from the narratives of the reign. Before the reign of Hezekiah Isaiah had already prophesied under three kings—Uzziah, Jotham, and Ahaz, so that his work coincides almost exactly with the second half of the eighth century B.C., and he was a witness of the events of Assyrian history from the accession of Tiglath-pileser III. in 745 to Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem in 701.

MICAH

He was a younger contemporary of Isaiah. He prophesied the fall of Samaria, and was active during the greater part of Hezekiah's reign. There is an interesting reference to him in the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah, according to his own account, had been seized by "the priests and the prophets and all the people," and was threatened with death for standing in the Temple court and delivering to "all the cities" of Judah a message of warning from Jehovah.

Jeremiah xxvi. 17-19

17. Then rose up certain of the elders of the land, and spake to all the assembly of the people, saying, 18. Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest. 19 Did Hezekiah

king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death ? did he not fear the LORD, and besought the LORD, and the LORD repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them ? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls.

ZEPHANIAH

Zephaniah belongs to the reign of Josiah, and probably prophesied before the discovery of the Book of the Law in 621 B.C. He gave utterance to both a warning and a promise, and taught Judah to learn a lesson from the correction she had received from Jehovah.

NAHUM

Of Nahum nothing at all is known with certainty, but his prophecies (chaps. ii. and iii.) have been assigned with great probability to the year preceding the fall of Nineveh (607 B.C.), with which city they are concerned.

HABAKKUK

Speaks of the punishment of Judah, for her wickedness, by the Chaldæans, the instruments of Jehovah's wrath, and may be dated as prophesying at the very end of the seventh century, just when Palestine was on the point of falling into the hands of Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon.

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah's life was a long struggle against fate, and his period of active interference with the politics of his time

extended from the reign of Josiah till after the final downfall of Jerusalem. Contemporary history is made very much clearer to us by the vivid narratives contained in his book, of which extracts are given below.

He taught the duty of spiritual rather than ceremonial obedience to Jehovah : he exposed unsparingly the faults of Jehoiakim (see p. 65) : and he urged in season and out of season the policy of keeping faith with Babylon, in opposition to the so-called patriotic, pro-Egypt party who gained the ear of Zedekiah. But his advice was systematically rejected, and he himself was carried off by his own countrymen to Egypt, where he died in exile.

(I) PERSECUTIONS IN THE REIGN OF JEHOIAKIM

(a) *The Persecution of Jeremiah*

Jeremiah xxvi. 1-16

Jeremiah delivers his message from Jehovah.—I. In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word from the LORD, saying, 2. Thus saith the LORD ; Stand in the court of the LORD's house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD's house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them ; diminish not a word : 3. if so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings. 4. And thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD ; If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, 5. to hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending them, but ye have not

hearkened; 6. then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth. 7. So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD.

Outcry against the prophet.—8. Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die. 9. Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

10. When the princes of Judah heard these things, then they came up from the king's house into the house of the LORD, and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the LORD's house. 11. Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears.

His reply.—12. Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard. 13. Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you. 14. As for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto

6. **Shiloh.** We know nothing of the destruction of Shiloh, which must have taken place in the lifetime of Samuel, probably in some Philistine raid. The doom of Shiloh seems to have become proverbial.

you. 15. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof : for of a truth the LORD hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.

16. Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets ; This man is not worthy to die ; for he hath spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God.

(b) The Persecution of Urijah

Jeremiah xxvi. 20-24

20. And there was also a man that prophesied in the name of the Lord, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjath-jearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah : 21. and when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men, and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death : but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid, and fled, and went into Egypt ; 22. and Jehoiakim the king sent men into Egypt, namely, Elnathan the son of Achbor, and certain men with him into Egypt. 23. And they fetched forth Urijah out of Egypt, and brought him unto Jehoiakim the king ; who slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people. 24. Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.

(2) THE BURNING OF JEREMIAH'S BOOK BY KING

JEHOIAKIM (about 604 B.C.)

Jeremiah xxxvi

1. And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the

son of Josiah king of Judah, that this word came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 2. Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. 3. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.

Baruch writes down Jeremiah's words.—4. Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah: and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book. 5. And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I am shut up; I cannot go into the house of the LORD: 6. therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the LORD in the ears of the people in the LORD's house upon the fasting day: and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities. 7. It may be they will present their supplication before the LORD, and will return every one from his evil way: for great is the anger and the fury that the LORD hath pronounced against this people. 8. And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the words of the LORD in the LORD's house. 9. And it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, in the ninth month, that they proclaimed a fast

2. roll of a book. Made of prepared skins, or leather. The penknife mentioned in verse 23 was used by the scribe to make erasures.

4. Baruch was a Jew of noble family who acted as Jeremiah's secretary, and was his companion in exile in Egypt.

before the LORD to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem.

Baruch reads them to the people.—10. Then read Baruch in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the higher court, at the entry of the new gate of the LORD's house, in the ears of all the people.

11. When Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, had heard out of the book all the words of the LORD, 12. then he went down into the king's house, into the scribe's chamber: and, 10, all the princes sat there, even Elishama the scribe, and Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, and Elnathan the son of Achbor, and Gemariah the son of Shaphan, and Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the princes. 13. Then Michaiah declared unto them all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read the book in the ears of the people. 14. Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, unto Baruch, saying, Take in thine hand the roll wherein thou hast read in the ears of the people, and come. So Baruch the son of Neriah took the roll in his hand, and came unto them.

Baruch reads them to the Princes.—15. And they said unto him, Sit down now, and read it in our ears. So Baruch read it in their ears. 16. Now it came to pass, when they had heard all the words, they were afraid both one and other, and said unto Baruch, We will surely tell the king of all these words. 17. And they asked Baruch, saying, Tell us now, How didst thou write all these words at his mouth? 18. Then Baruch answered them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink in the book. 19. Then said the princes unto Baruch, Go,

hide thee, thou and Jeremiah; and let no man know where ye be.

The Book is read to the King.—20. And they went in to the king into the court, but they laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the ears of the king. 21. So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll: and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king.

The King destroys the first edition of Jeremiah.—22. Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him. 23. And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth. 24. Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words. 25. Nevertheless Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah had made intercession to the king that he would not burn the roll: but he would not hear them. 26. But the king commanded Jerahmeel the son of Hammelech, and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet: but the Lord hid them.

Jehoiakim is condemned.—27. Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, after that the king had burned

22. winterhouse, *i.e.* the warmer and more retired *rooms* of the house, as contrasted with the more open and airy rooms used in summer.

ninth month. December.

hearth. R.V. brasier.

the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah, saying, 28. Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned. 29. And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, Thus saith the LORD ; Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast ? 30. Therefore thus saith the LORD of Jehoiakim king of Judah ; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David : and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. 31. And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity ; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them ; but they hearkened not.

The writing of the second edition of Jeremiah.—32. Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah ; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire : and there were added besides unto them many like words.

(3) THE IMPRISONMENT OF JEREMIAH IN THE REIGN OF ZEDEKIAH

Jeremiah xxxvii., xxxviii

xxxvii. 1. And king Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned

32. another roll. Thus we get, at first hand, an authentic account of the origin of the first and second editions of The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah.

instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah. 2. But neither he, nor his servants, nor the people of the land, did hearken unto the words of the LORD, which he spake by the prophet Jeremiah. 3. And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Pray now unto the LORD our God for us. 4. Now Jeremiah came in and went out among the people : for they had not put him into prison. 5. Then Pharaoh's army was come forth out of Egypt : and when the Chaldeans that besieged Jerusalem heard tidings of them, they departed from Jerusalem.

Jeremiah speaks against Egypt.—6. Then came the word of the LORD unto the prophet Jeremiah, saying, 7. Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel ; Thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto me to enquire of me ; Behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own land. 8. And the Chaldeans shall come again, and fight against this city, and take it, and burn it with fire. 9. Thus saith the LORD ; Deceive not yourselves, saying, The Chaldeans shall surely depart from us : for they shall not depart. 10. For though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained but wounded men among them, yet should they rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire.

He is accused of favouring the Babylonians, and is imprisoned.—11. And it came to pass, that when the army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem for fear of

1. Coniah, or Jehoiachin.

5. Pharaoh = Hophra, king of Egypt.

Pharaoh's army, 12. then Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin, to separate himself thence in the midst of the people. 13. And when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the ward was there, whose name was Irijah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah ; and he took Jeremiah the prophet, saying, Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans. 14. Then said Jeremiah, It is false ; I fall not away to the Chaldeans. But he hearkened not to him ; so Irijah took Jeremiah, and brought him to the princes. 15. Wherefore the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe : for they had made that the prison.

Zedekiah consults him secretly.—16. When Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon, and into the cabins, and Jeremiah had remained there many days ; 17. then Zedekiah the king sent, and took him out : and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, Is there any word from the LORD ? and Jeremiah said, There is : for, said he, thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. 18. Moreover Jeremiah said unto king Zedekiah, What have I offended against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put me in prison ? 19. Where are now your prophets which prophesied unto you, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this land ? 20. Therefore hear now, I pray thee, O my lord the king : let my supplication, I pray thee, be accepted before thee ; that thou cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there. 21. Then Zedekiah the king commanded that they should commit Jeremiah into the

16. cabins, *i.e.* prison cells.

court of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread out of the bakers' street, until all the bread in the city were spent. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

The Princes put him into a foul dungeon.—xxxviii. 1. Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying, 2. Thus saith the LORD, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live. 3. Thus saith the LORD, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it. 4. Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them; for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt. 5. Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he is in your hand: for the king is not he that can do any thing against you. 6. Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.

Ebed-melech intercedes for him, and gives him better quarters again.—7. Now when Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon; the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin; 8. Ebed-melech went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the king, saying, 9. My

lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon ; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is : for there is no more bread in the city.

10. Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die. 11. So Ebed-melech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence old cast clouts and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah. 12. And Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now these old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so. 13. So they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the dungeon : and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

Zedekiah once more consults him secretly.—14. Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took Jeremiah the prophet unto him into the third entry that is in the house of the LORD : and the king said unto Jeremiah, I will ask thee a thing ; hide nothing from me. 15. Then Jeremiah said unto Zedekiah, If I declare it unto thee, wilt thou not surely put me to death ? and if I give thee counsel wilt thou not hearken unto me ? 16. So Zedekiah the king sware secretly unto Jeremiah, saying, As the LORD liveth, that made us this soul, I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hand of these men that seek thy life.

He advises submission to Babylon.—17. Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel ; If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul

shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire ; and thou shalt live, and thine house : 18. but if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand. 19. And Zedekiah the king said unto Jeremiah, I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me. 20. But Jeremiah said, They shall not deliver thee. Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the LORD, which I speak unto thee : so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live. 21. But if thou refuse to go forth, this is the word that the LORD hath shewed me : 22. And, behold, all the women that are left in the king of Judah's house shall be brought forth to the king of Babylon's princes, and those women shall say, Thy friends have set thee on, and have prevailed against thee : thy feet are sunk in the mire, and they are turned away back. 23. So they shall bring out all thy wives and thy children to the Chaldeans : and thou shalt not escape out of their hand, but shalt be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon : and thou shalt cause this city to be burned with fire.

24. Then said Zedekiah unto Jeremiah, Let no man know of these words, and thou shalt not die. 25. But if the princes hear that I have talked with thee, and they come unto thee, and say unto thee, Declare unto us now what thou hast said unto the king, hide it not from us, and we will not put thee to death ; also what the king said unto thee : 26. then thou shalt say unto them, I presented my supplication before the king, that he would not cause me to return to Jonathan's house, to die there. 27. Then came all the princes unto Jeremiah, and asked him : and

he told them according to all these words that the king had commanded. So they left off speaking with him ; for the matter was not perceived. 28. So Jeremiah abode in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken : and he was there when Jerusalem was taken.

(4) THE BABYLONIANS PERMIT JEREMIAH TO REMAIN IN
PALESTINE, 586 B.C.

Jeremiah xl. 1-6

1. The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, after that Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him being bound in chains among all that were carried away captive of Jerusalem and Judah, which were carried away captive unto Babylon. 2. And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah, and said unto him, The LORD thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place. 3. Now the LORD hath brought it, and done according as he hath said : because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed his voice, therefore this thing is come upon you. 4. And now, behold, I loose thee this day from the chains which were upon thine hand. If it seem good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come ; and I will look well unto thee : but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me into Babylon, forbear : behold, all the land is before thee : whither it seemeth good and convenient for thee to go, thither go. 5. Now while he was not yet gone back, he said, Go back also to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon hath made governor over the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people : or go wheresoever it seemeth convenient unto thee to go. So the captain of the guard gave him victuals

and a reward, and let him go. 6. Then went Jeremiah unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah ; and dwelt with him among the people that were left in the land.

(5) JEREMIAH IS COMPELLED BY HIS COUNTRYMEN TO GO
WITH THEM INTO EXILE IN EGYPT

Jeremiah xlii. 7—xliii. 7

Jeremiah advises the remnant of the people to be loyal to Babylon.—xlii. 7. And it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah. 8. Then called he Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces which were with him, and all the people from the least even to the greatest, 9. and said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto whom ye sent me to present your supplication before him ; 10. If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up : for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you. 11. Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid ; be not afraid of him, saith the LORD : for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand. 12. And I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land. 13. But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the LORD your God, 14. saying, No ; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread ; and there will we dwell : 15. and now therefore hear the word of the Lord, ye remnant of Judah ; thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel ; If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to sojourn there ;

16. then it shall come to pass, that the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt ; and there ye shall die. 17. So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there ; they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence : and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them. 18. For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel ; As mine anger and my fury hath been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem ; so shall my fury be poured forth upon you, when ye shall enter into Egypt : and ye shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach ; and ye shall see this place no more. 19. The LORD hath said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah ; Go ye not into Egypt : know certainly that I have admonished you this day. 20. For ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the LORD your God, saying, Pray for us unto the LORD our God ; and according unto all that the LORD our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do it. 21. And now I have this day declared it to you ; but ye have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, nor any thing for the which he hath sent me unto you. 22. Now therefore know certainly that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go and to sojourn.

Jeremiah is carried off to Egypt.—xliii. 1. And it came to pass, that when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking unto all the people all the words of the LORD their God, for which the LORD their God had sent him to them, even all these words, 2. then spake Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the

proud men, saying unto Jeremiah, Thou speakest falsely : the LORD our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there : 3. but Baruch the son of Neriah setteth thee on against us, for to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they might put us to death, and carry us away captives into Babylon. 4. So Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, and all the people, obeyed not the voice of the LORD, to dwell in the land of Judah. 5. But Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, took all the remnant of Judah, that were returned from all nations, whither they had been driven, to dwell in the land of Judah ; 6. even men, and women, and children, and the king's daughters, and every person that Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah. 7. So they came into the land of Egypt : for they obeyed not the voice of the LORD : thus came they even to Tahpanhes.

THE WITNESS OF THE PROPHETS FROM HEZEKIAH TO THE DOWNFALL OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH

I. THE CONDITION OF JUDAH BEFORE HEZEKIAH'S REIGN

Isaiah ii. 6-9

6. Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers. 7. Their land also is

7. Tahpanhes = Daphnæ (classical name), 20 miles from Pelusium, on the east frontier of Lower Egypt.

6 east, *i.e.* they have adopted from the East religious ideas and rites, foreign to the pure religion of Jehovah.

full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots: 8. their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made: 9. and the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself; therefore forgive them not.

Isaiah iii. 12-15

12. As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths. 13. The LORD standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people. 14. The LORD will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. 15. What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the LORD God of hosts.

2. HEZEKIAH THINKS OF REVOLTING AGAINST ASSYRIA
7II B.C., AND TRUSTS IN EGYPT TO SUPPORT HIM

Isaiah xx. 1-6

1. In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod, and took it; 2. at the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot. 3. And the LORD said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath

1. **Ashdod.** One of the Philistine cities, which had refused to pay tribute. Judah, with Moab and Edom, was being urged by Egypt to join the revolt.

walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia ; 4. so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, to the shame of Egypt. 5. And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory. 6. And the inhabitant of this isle shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, whither we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria : and how shall we escape ?

3. THE PROPHET FORETELLS THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM BY SENNACHERIB IN 701 B.C.

Isaiah xxix. 1-6

1. Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt ! add ye year to year ; let them kill sacrifices. 2. Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow : and it shall be unto me as Ariel. 3. And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee. 4. And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust. 5. Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away : yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly. 6. Thou shalt be visited of the

6. isle. R.V. coastland, *i.e.* Palestine.

1. Ariel means either the Lion of God, or the Hearth of God ; in verses 1-2 there is a play on the name. Isaiah pictures Jerusalem as soon to be like an altar-hearth, reeking with victims.

add ye year to year (probably) at the end of the year after this.

LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.

4. ISAIAH'S PROPHECIES OF A MESSIAH OF THE LINE OF DAVID

Isaiah ix. 1-7

1. But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time hath he made it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the nations.¹ 2. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light : they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. 3. Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy : they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. 4. For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. 5. For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood ; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. 6. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given : and the government shall be upon his shoulder : and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

¹ The reading given is that of R.V.

5. MICAH'S DENUNCIATION OF THE PRINCES AND THE FALSE PROPHETS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE REIGN OF HEZEKIAH

Micah iii. 1-7

1. And I said, Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel ; Is it not for you to know judgment ? 2. Who hate the good, and love the evil ; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones ; 3. who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them ; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron. 4. Then shall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them : he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.

5. Thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace ; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him. 6. Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision ; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine ; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. 7. Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded : yea, they shall all cover their lips ; for there is no answer of God.

6. A VISION OF GLORY AND PEACE

Micah iv. 1-7

1. But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above

the hills ; and people shall flow unto it. 2. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob ; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths : for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

3. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off ; and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruninghooks ; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. 4. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree ; and none shall make them afraid : for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it. 5. For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever. 6. In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted ; 7. and I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast off a strong nation : and the LORD shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.

7. THE DOOM OF NINEVEH, ACCOMPLISHED IN 607 B.C.

Nahum i. 2, 3, 15

2. God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth ; the LORD revengeth, and is furious ; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.

3. The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked : the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.

15. Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that

bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows : for the wicked shall no more pass through thee ; he is utterly cut off.

8. IN THE EARLY YEARS OF JOSIAH'S REIGN THE PROPHET WARNS THE PEOPLE OF THE COMING OF "THE DAY OF THE LORD "

Zephaniah i. 12-16

12. And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees : that say in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil. 13. Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation : they shall also build houses, but not inhabit them ; and they shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof. 14. The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD : the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. 15. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, 16. a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.

9. THE WORDS OF JEREMIAH

(a) *In the reign of Jehoiakim. The true service demanded by Jehovah*

Jeremiah vii. 1-7

1. The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD saying, 2. Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and

12. Settled on their lees : metaphor from the dregs of wine, *i.e.* men who are content to remain still and inactive.

proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD. 3. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. 4. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these. 5. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; 6. if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: 7. then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.

(b) *His condemnation of Jehoiakim*

Jeremiah xxii. 13-19

13. Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work; 14. that saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is cieled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. 15. Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar? did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him? 16. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the LORD. 17. But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it. 18. Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah;

They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah, my brother ! or, Ah sister ! they shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord ! or, Ah his glory ! 19. He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

(c) *One of his prophecies of the downfall of Jerusalem in the reign of Zedekiah*

Jeremiah xxi. 3-7

3. Then said Jeremiah unto them, Thus shall ye say to Zedekiah : 4. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel ; Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and against the Chaldeans, which besiege you without the walls, and I will assemble them into the midst of this city. 5. And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath. 6. And I will smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast : they shall die of a great pestilence. 7. And afterward, saith the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life : and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword ; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy.

PART II

*FROM THE CAPTIVITY TO THE
RESTORATION*

586—538 B.C.

INTRODUCTORY

TO this period belong the books of Daniel, Ezekiel, and the Second Isaiah (Isaiah xl.-lxvi.). Some of the Psalms, a few fragments of Jeremiah, and the beautiful book of Lamentations illustrate the conditions of life among the exiles and the desolation of Jerusalem. References, also, to the Song of the Three Children and other parts of the apocryphal¹ literature are given in their place below. The meagre narrative of the sacred Scripture is confirmed in outline by the records of the inscriptions and profane history: but little light is thrown by these, except indirectly, upon the life of the deported Israelites.

Space does not admit of even a cursory sketch of the development of the Jewish people socially and religiously in their new surroundings. Two points alone can be mentioned of particular importance to the student. (*a*) The captivity is the period of the greatest literary activity among the Hebrews. Collections of their ancient writings and traditions were made and moulded to a great extent into the form which they bear in the Old Testament Canon. (*b*) It was at this time that what is called Judaism first originated. The body of ordinances, which subsequently was expanded into a burden grievous to be borne, was in the early days of their separation from their own land and temple a factor of incalculable value to the Hebrew people.

¹ See note on the formation of the O.T. Canon, p. 229.

It served to maintain the distinctive features of their faith and nationality, and to form a bulwark against the influences of Hellenism, which in this and the following centuries succeeded in permeating and to some degree denationalising all the other races of the Old World which came in contact with it. In a word, the Captivity bequeathed to posterity these two legacies which were to be indispensable to the growth of Christianity—the Old Testament and the Jewish Church.

The book of Daniel is divided into two parts, the second of which (chaps. vii–xii.) contains an account of certain apocalyptic visions which the writer experienced relating to Israel's future. These chapters are omitted from the present book. It is generally held by scholars that the stories related in the first six chapters, though based upon historical fact, are (like the book of Esther) examples of the *haggâdhoth*, that is, of traditions freely dealt with for the purpose of religious and moral instruction. In this case the intention of the writer is to exhibit God's providence and care for His people and to hold up to future generations a pattern of unwavering faith amid adversity. In its present form the book of Daniel is a product of the second century B.C., certainly not before the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria, 175–165 B.C.

Daniel, the hero round whose name the traditional stories centre, is said to have been deported with others to Babylon in 606 B.C.¹ He survived, according to the story, until after the subjugation of Babylon by Cyrus "the Persian" in 538 B.C. Thus his career just coincided

¹ There is no other record of any deportation of Jews to Babylon at so early a date; and it is unlikely that such an event could have preceded the battle of Carchemish, in 605 B.C.

with the period of Babylonian hegemony in the East. In 607 B.C., when Daniel was apparently a child, Assyria fell, as we have seen, before the combined onslaught of Babylon, Elam, and the Scythian hordes. Nebuchadrezzar, within a year after his victory at Carchemish (605 B.C.), which made Babylon mistress of the whole of the East from the Euphrates to Egypt, succeeded to his father's throne, and reigned until 561 B.C. Four monarchs followed him in quick succession, the last of whom, a usurper named Nabonidus, handed over to his son Belshazzar—the “king Belshazzar” of the story—the government of the city of Babylon.

Meanwhile Cyrus, an ambitious and able warrior, had usurped the Median throne, crushed the Greeks of Ionia, and the monarchy of Lydia, and converted the Median kingdom into the “Persian Empire” which stretched from the Ægean to India. In 538 his lieutenant Gobryas, or Gubaru, took Babylon, and Persia attained the general suzerainty of the East. Nabonidus the king fled, but was dragged back to Babylon in chains, and died four months later; his son Belshazzar was, as the Biblical narrative tells us, slain. The Jewish captives on the Euphrates thus became Persian subjects, and Palestine a province of the Persian Empire.

STORY OF DANIEL

PROMOTION OF DANIEL AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

Daniel i. 3-20

3. And the king spake unto Ashpēnaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of

3. the king, *i.e.* Nebuchadrezzar (miscalled Nebuchadnezzar).

Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes ; 4. children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. 5. And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank ; so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. 6. Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah : 7. unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names : for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar ; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach ; and to Mishael, of Meshach ; and to Azariah, of Abed-nego.

8. But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank : therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. 9. Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. 10. And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink : for why

3. the king's seed, *i.e.* princes of the royal house of Judah who were among the captives at Babylon.

4. the tongue of the Chaldeans. The Semitic languages and dialects, of which there was a great variety, are generally classified under : A. Northern group ; B. Southern group.

A. embraces, among others, the three dialects which concern us :

1. Hebrew.

2. The dialect of Syria and Mesopotamia, called Syriac, or simply Aramaic.

3. The Assyrian or Babylonian dialect. This is what is meant by the tongue of the Chaldæans here.

A. 2. is often, though wrongly, called Chaldæan.

B. embraces Arabic, Ethiopic, etc.

For the adoption by the Jews of A. 2., Aramaic, as their ordinary tongue, see below, p. 128,

should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort ? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king. 11. Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12. Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days ; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. 13. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat : and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. 14. So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. 15. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. 16. Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink ; and gave them pulse. 17. As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom : and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. 18. Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. 19. And the king communed with them ; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah : therefore stood they before the king. 20. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

NEBUCHADREZZAR'S DREAM

Daniel ii. 1-49

1. Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. 2. Then

the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. 3. And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. 4. Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever : tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation. 5. The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me : if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. 6. But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour : therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. 7. They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it. 8. The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. 9. But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you : for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed : therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof.

10. The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter : therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. 11. And it is a rare thing that the king

4. in Syriack, *i.e.* the Aramaic dialect. See i. 4, note.

9. time be changed, *i.e.* until my attention is diverted, and you are thereby relieved from the fear that I shall see through your pretences.

requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. 2. For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.

13. And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain ; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain. 14. Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon : 15. he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king ? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. 16. Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation. 17. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions : 18. that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret ; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel thanks God for revealing the dream to him.—19. Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. 20. Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever : for wisdom and might are his : 21. and he changeth the times and the seasons : he removeth kings, and setteth up kings : he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding : 22. he revealeth the deep and secret things : he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. 23. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known

unto me now what we desired of thee : for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

24. Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon : he went and said thus unto him ; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon : bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation. 25. Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation. 26. The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof ? 27. Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king ; 28. but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these : 29. as for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter : and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. 30. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.

He declares the dream.—31. Thou, O king, sawest, and

30. but for their sakes. The A.V. translation is wrong. Read simply, " But in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that thou mayest know," etc.

behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee ; and the form thereof was terrible. 32. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass. 33. His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. 34. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 35. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors ; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them : and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

And its interpretation: the five kingdoms.—36. This is the dream ; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. 37. Thou, O king, art a king of kings : for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. 38. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. 39. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. 40. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron : forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things : and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

38. The historical interpretation of this prophecy is this:

- (i) The Babylonian supremacy, ended 538 B.C.
- (ii) The Median. (iii) The Persian (the writer regarded this as distinct from the Median) ended 331 B.C.
- (iv) The Macedonian (Alexandrian) which was divided ("feet of clay").
- (v) The Messianic.

41. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 42. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. 43. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. 44. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. 45. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

Daniel and his friends are promoted.—46. Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him. 47. The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret. 48. Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole

48. province of Babylon. Daniel was made viceroy of the central province of the empire and head of the "wise men" of the entire empire.

province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. 49. Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

THE FIERY FURNACE

Daniel iii. 1-30

1. Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. 2. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; 3. and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 4. Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, 5. that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: 6. and whoso falleth not

49. sat in the gate of the king, *i.e.* remained at the king's court. The same phrase is used of the royal courtiers and attendants in the book of Esther.

1. plain of Dura. Scholars are unable exactly to locate this, especially as it is not determined how far the "province of Babylon" extended. The most probable identification is that of a plain to the east of Babylon, where what seems to be the base of a great statue has been found, near a mound called Duair.

5. The reader who is ambitious accurately to identify these instruments is referred to the article "Music," in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*. The dulcimer is by tradition identified with the bagpipes, the Aramaic word of the original being a transliteration of the Greek *συμφωνία*.

down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 7. Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down, and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

8. Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews. 9. They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. 10. Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image: 11. and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 12. There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Daniel's three friends refuse to worship the image.—
13. Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, Then they brought these men before the king. 14. Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? 15. Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye

shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace ; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands ? 16. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. 17. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. 18. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

19. Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego : therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. 20. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. 21. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 22. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. 23. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 24. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king

23. After this verse there follows, in some of the ancient versions of the Book of Daniel, a passage which was not included in the Hebrew Canon, giving the prayer and the hymn of the three sufferers in the furnace. The hymn is used in the English Church Service, under the title of "Benedicite, omnia opera"; and the whole of the passage will be found in the Apocrypha under the section "The Song of the Three Holy Children."

was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire ? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. 25. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt ; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

26. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire. 27. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

28. Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. 29. Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill : because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. 30. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the province of Babylon.

25. Son of God, lit. a son of the gods, *i.e.* an angel, as in verse 28.

A PROCLAMATION ADDRESSED BY NEBUCHADREZZAR TO
HIS PEOPLE

Nebuchadnezzar's Humiliation

Daniel iv. 1-37

1. Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations and languages, that dwell in all the earth ; Peace be multiplied unto you. 2. I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. 3. How great are his signs ! and how mighty are his wonders ! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.

4. I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace : 5. I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. 6. Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream. 7. Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers : and I told the dream before them ; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.

8. But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods : and before him I told the dream, saying, 9. O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.

1. This chapter is the record of an "acted parable," conveying a lesson, in the same way as many of the miracles of our Lord are also "acted parables."

10. Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed ; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. 11. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth : 12. the leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all : the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. 13. I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven ; 14. he cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit : let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches : 15. nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field ; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth : 16. let his heart be changed from man's and let a beast's heart be given unto him ; and let seven times pass over him. 17. This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones : to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men. 18. This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make

13. the holy watcher = an angel, lit. " a wakeful one."

16. The form of madness from which Nebuchadnezzar suffered for seven years is discussed and illustrated in an interesting fashion by Dr. Pusey, *Lectures on Daniel*, 3rd ed., pp. 428-436. By the Greeks this kind of insanity is called Lycanthropy.

known unto me the interpretation : but thou art able ; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee.

19. Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.

20. The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth ; 21. whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all ; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation : 22. it is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong : for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. 23. And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it ; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field ; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him ; 24. this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king : 25. that they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till

19. the dream be to them, etc. Daniel apologises for the bad news which the king forces him to declare. "Would," he says, "that the disaster, which I have to foretell, might fall on the king's enemies, not on himself."

thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. 26. And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots ; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule. 27. Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor ; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

Nebuchadrezzar's seven years' insanity.—28. All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. 29. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. 30. The king spake, and said, is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty ? 31. While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken ; The kingdom is departed from thee. 32. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field : they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. 33. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar : and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.

And recovery.—34. And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth

for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation : 35. and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing : and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth : and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou ? 36. At the same time my reason returned unto me ; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me ; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me ; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. 37. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment : and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

CAPTURE OF THE CITY, AND OVERTHROW OF THE BABYLONIAN RULE BY PERSIA 538 B.C.

Daniel v. 1-31

1. Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. 2. Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem ; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. 3. Then they brought the

1. Belshazzar was regent at Babylon in place of his father, King Nabonidus.

2. his father Nebuchadnezzar. The term "father" is (1) either used loosely for "predecessor," or (2) it is meant to suggest that Belshazzar's father Nabonidus had married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, and therefore it = grandfather, the word father being generally employed in Hebrew and Aramaic, as Dr. Pusey points out, to express forefather or grandfather ; or else (3) the writer has made a mistake. But stress must not be laid on accuracy of historical detail ; see Introduction to Part II.

golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem ; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them.

4. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

5. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace : and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. 6. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. 7. The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. 8. Then came in all the king's wise men : but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. 9. Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished.

Daniel is asked to interpret the writing on the wall.—

10. Now the queen by reason of the words of the king and his lords came into the banquet house : and the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever : let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed :

11. there is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods ; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him ; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of

the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers ; 12. forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar : now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation. 13. Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry ? 14. I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. 15. And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof : but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing. 16. And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts : now if thou canst read this writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

17. Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another ; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation. 18. O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour : 19. and for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him : whom he would he slew ; and whom he would he kept alive ; and whom he would he set up ; and whom he would he put down. 20. But

when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him : 21. and he was driven from the sons of men ; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses : they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven ; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will. 22. And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this ; 23. but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven ; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them ; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know : and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified : 24. then was the part of the hand sent from him ; and this writing was written. 25. And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. 26. This is the interpretation of the thing : MENE ; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. 27. TEKEL ; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

25. Měnē, tēkēl, pērēs (pronounce to rhyme with betray, bewail, deface) are Aramaic words. Mene = a mina (μνᾶ), tekēl = a shekel, peres = a divided- or half-mina. Peres is the singular of parsin ; u = and, and causes the aspirated ph, for p, when prefixed thus. So the words mean "a mina, a mina, a shekel, and half-minas." The puzzle which the words presented to the banqueters was caused either because they were written on the wall in an unfamiliar form of the Aramaic character, or else perhaps with the letters in a vertical instead of a horizontal arrangement ; also there was the difficulty of attaching any meaning to them, when read. Daniel derives from the literal meaning of the words a secondary interpretation, suggested by the etymology of the words themselves. See Driver, *Camb. Bible, ad loc.*

28. PERES ; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. 29. Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

30. In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. 31. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

THE TRIAL OF DANIEL BY THE ORDEAL OF THE LIONS' DEN

Daniel vi. 1-28

1. It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom ; 2. and over these three presidents ; of whom Daniel was first : that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. 3. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him ; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

4. Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom ; but they could find none occasion nor fault ; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. 5. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the

31. Darius. Here again the writer makes a slip. Either he miscalls Gobryas, the general of Cyrus who actually captured the city, by the name Darius ; or he reads back into the history of the past the name of Darius Hystaspes, who succeeded to the throne of Persia in 521 B.C.—some seventeen years later than the event recorded here. For prophecies of the destruction of Babylon, see Isaiah xxi., xlv. ; Jeremiah li., etc.

law of his God. 6. Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. 7. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. 8. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. 9. Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

10. Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house ; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. 11. Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. 12. Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree ; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions ? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. 13. Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day. 14. Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself,

8. Cf. the book of Esther; where again it is stated to be unconstitutional in Persia to rescind a decree.

and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him : and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him. 15. Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed. 16. Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. 17. And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den ; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords ; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

18. Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting : neither were instruments of musick brought before him : and his sleep went from him. 19. Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. 20. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel : and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions ? 21. Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. 22. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me : forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me ; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. 23. Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.

24. And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives : and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

25. Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth ; Peace be multiplied unto you. 26. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel : for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. 27. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. 28. So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

25. *I.e.* he caused his edict to be published in all the empire. For the exaggeration *cf.* Tiglath-pileser I. of Assyria, who called himself " King of the Four Quarters of the World," see p. 5. Cyrus also arrogated to himself the title " King of the World."

28. In the Apocrypha are found two more stories illustrating the wisdom and the integrity of Daniel. In one of them, the history of Susanna, by his skill Daniel, like Solomon before him, pronounces a just verdict which confutes false witnesses against the honour of an upright Jewish wife. In the other, Bel and the Dragon, Daniel's refusal to acknowledge the Persian idols is vindicated by an exposure of their falsity. These stories, together with those in the canonical chapters of the book, were written in the time of persecution in the second century B.C., to confirm the faith of the believing Jews and strengthen their sense of individual responsibility and obedience to the voice of conscience. This motive is especially conspicuous in the description of the beautiful character of Susanna, who " firm in the faith of an Almighty Judge, stood unmoved in the dreadful choice between death and dishonour." " It is better for me to fall into your hands . . . than to sin in the sight of the Lord . . . and behold, I must die." But Daniel saved her from this fate.

DANIEL'S CONFESSION AND PRAYER FOR THE RESTORATION
OF JERUSALEM

Daniel ix. 3-19

3. And I set my face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes : 4. and I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments ; 5. we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments : 6. neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. 7. O LORD, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day ; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. 8. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. 9. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him ; 10. neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. 11. Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice ; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. 12. And he

hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil : for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. 13. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us : yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. 14. Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us : for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth : for we obeyed not his voice. 15. And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day ; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

16. O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain : because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. 17. Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. 18. O my God, incline thine ear, and hear ; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name : for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. 19. O Lord, hear ; O Lord, forgive ; O Lord, hearken and do ; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God : for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

(For a short account of the prophetic chapters of the Book of Daniel see below, p. 220, where they are discussed in their proper chronological context.)

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE PERIOD OF THE EXILE FROM THE PROPHE- TICAL AND OTHER BOOKS

(I) JEREMIAH

The work of this prophet belongs almost entirely to the years preceding the captivity. His letter, however, to the exiles in Babylon, written from Jerusalem in about 593 B.C., before the final destruction of the city, is of much interest, and is rightly to be included in the literature of the period now before us.

The second extract is from Jeremiah's Lamentations. In beautiful language the poet-prophet, "the most tender-hearted and pathetic of prophets," pronounces the funeral dirge of Jerusalem and the theocracy. These Lamentations were written, it seems, just after the sack of the city and ruin of the Temple (586 B.C.), and before the prophet was carried off to his death in Egypt.

"In the face of a rocky hill, on the western side of the city, the local belief has placed 'the grotto of Jeremiah.' There, in that fixed attitude of grief which Michael Angelo has immortalised,¹ the prophet may well be supposed to have mourned the fall of his country."²

LETTER TO THE EXILES

Jeremiah xxix. 4-15, 20-3, 31, 32

4. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon ;

¹ In the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican.

² Stanley, *Jewish Church*, vol. ii., 477.

5. build ye houses, and dwell in them ; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them ; 6. take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters ; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters ; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished. 7. And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it : for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace. 8. For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel ; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed. 9. For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name : I have not sent them, saith the LORD. 10. For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. 11. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. 12. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. 13. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. 14. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD : and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD ; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

THE LYING PROPHETS AT BABYLON ARE CONDEMNED

15. Because ye have said, The LORD hath raised us up prophets in Babylon ; 20. hear ye therefore the word of

the LORD, all ye of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon : 21. thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, of Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and of Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, which prophesy a lie unto you in my name ; behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon ; and he shall slay them before your eyes ; 22. and of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which are in Babylon, saying, The LORD make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire ; 23. because they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them ; even I know, and am a witness, saith the LORD.

31. Thus saith the LORD concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite ; Because that Shemaiah hath prophesied unto you, and I sent him not, and he caused you to trust in a lie : 32. therefore thus saith the LORD ; Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed : he shall not have a man to dwell among this people ; neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people, saith the LORD ; because he hath taught rebellion against the LORD.

THE PROPHET'S LAMENT FOR THE CITY

Lamentations i. 1-8, 11, 12

1. How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people ! how is she become as a widow ! she that was great among

32. he . . . people. *i.e.* he shall leave no children behind him.

the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary! 2. She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies. 3. Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude: she dwelleth among the heathen, she findeth no rest: all her persecutors overtook her between the straits. 4. The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness. 5. Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper; for the LORD hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions: her children are gone into captivity before the enemy. 6. And from the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed: her princes are become like harts that find no pasture, and they are gone without strength before the pursuer. 7. Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, when her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her: the adversaries saw her, and did mock at her sabbaths. 8. Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed: all that honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness: yea, she sigheth, and turneth backward. 11. All her people sigh, they seek bread; they have given their pleasant things for meat to relieve the soul: see, O LORD, and consider; for I am become vile.

3. straits. "They have hunted her down in the defiles, whence escape is impossible."

8. removed = "become an abomination."

11. to relieve the soul = "to sustain life."

12. Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by ? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.

AN APPEAL FOR DELIVERANCE

Lamentations v. 19-22

19. Thou, O LORD, remainest for ever ; thy throne from generation to generation. 20. Wherefore dost thou forget us for ever, and forsake us so long time ? 21. Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned ; renew our days as of old. 22. But thou hast utterly rejected us ; thou art very wroth against us.

(2) THE PSALMS

(a) THE SONG OF THE FAITHFUL, ON THEIR WAY INTO EXILE

Psalm xlii

1. As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

2. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God : when shall I come and appear before God ?

3. My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God ?

4. When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me : for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.

12. Jerusalem is the speaker.

4. for I had gone. " For I used to go, in the old happy days, with the festive throng," etc.

5. Why art thou cast down, O my soul ? and why art thou disquieted in me ? hope thou in God : for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

6. O my God, my soul is cast down within me : therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.

7. Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts : all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

8. Yet the LORD will command his loving-kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.

9. I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me ? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy ?

10. As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me ; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God ?

11. Why art thou cast down, O my soul ? and why art thou disquieted within me ? hope thou in God : for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

(b) THE SONG OF THE HOPEFUL, IN EXILE

Psalm cii

1. Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto thee.

2. Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in

6. The psalmist is apparently on his way to the land of captivity and thus pours out his soul while he is halting at Mount Mizar, one of the lesser peaks of the Hermon range, near the sources of the Jordan.

7. Deep echoes to deep amid the roar of the cataracts. A metaphor picturing the torrent of troubles which overwhelmed the singer.

trouble ; incline thine ear unto me : in the day when I call answer me speedily.

3. For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth.

4. My heart is smitten, and withered like grass ; so that I forget to eat my bread.

5. By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin.

6. I am like a pelican of the wilderness : I am like an owl of the desert.

7. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top.

8. Mine enemies reproach me all the day ; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me.

9. For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping,

10. Because of thine indignation and thy wrath : for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.

11. My days are like a shadow that declineth ; and I am withered like grass.

12. But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever ; and thy remembrance unto all generations.

13. Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion : for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.

14. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.

15. So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.

16. When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.

17. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.

18. This shall be written for the generation to come :
and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD.

19. For he hath looked down from the height of his
sanctuary : from heaven did the LORD behold the earth ;

20. To hear the groaning of the prisoner ; to loose those
that are appointed to death ;

21. To declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and his
praise in Jerusalem ;

22. When the people are gathered together, and the
kingdoms, to serve the LORD.

23. He weakened my strength in the way ; he shortened
my days.

24. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of
my days : thy years are throughout all generations.

25. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth :
and the heavens are the work of thy hands.

26. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure : yea,
all of them shall wax old like a garment ; as a vesture
shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed :

27. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

28. The children of thy servants shall continue, and
their seed shall be established before thee.

(c) THE SONG OF THE MOURNFUL, IN EXILE

Psalm cxxxvii

1. By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea,
we wept, when we remembered Zion.

2. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst
thereof.

23. in the way, *i.e.* in the wandering journey from Jerusalem
to Babylon.

3. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song ; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

4. How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land ?

5. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

6. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth : if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

7. Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem ; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.

8. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed ; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.

9. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

(3) EZEKIEL

This prophet, who was also a priest, was among those carried to Babylon in 597 B.C. For twenty-two years (592-570) he was the mainstay of the captive community there.

Privileged though they were to enjoy civil liberty and religious toleration in their strange home, nor reduced

7. Even the meekest of the Hebrews felt himself filled with indignation at the behaviour of the Edomites to the city in the day of its calamity. Jeremiah himself (Lam. iv. 21, 22) is moved to utter curses upon them. " They stood in the passes to intercept the escape of those who would have fled down to the Jordan valley ; they betrayed the fugitives ; they indulged their barbarous revels on the Temple hill " (Stanley, *Jewish Church*, vol. ii., 475, and Obadiah 14, 16). This psalm exhibits their savage exultation at the overthrow of the walls of the city.

in any sense to slavery, the Jews might yet have been driven to despair, and, by allowing themselves to be absorbed among the Babylonian tribes, might have faded out of existence, had not a powerful guide arisen to control their destiny. Ezekiel felt it to be his divine mission to arrest the retrograde tendencies of his countrymen. Of these some were exhibiting a spirit of hopelessness which took refuge in frank idolatry ; some rebelliously questioned the justice of Jehovah's treatment of Israel : some sank into blank indifference to present and future alike.

Ezekiel rectified this. In the obdurate he awakened a sense of penitence ; to the querulous he vindicated God's justice ; upon all he enforced the observance of religious duty and worship. He was pastor to the flock. On the canal banks he held services of prayer, and maintained such of the distinctive rites of their religion as absence from the Temple and lack of their accustomed organisation would permit. From this time onward *prayer* superseded *sacrifice* as the essential feature of the Jewish religion ; and the *individual* value of the human soul became more fully realised, as contrasted with the earlier predominance in the eyes of the Jew of the *nation* as Jehovah's firstborn. Ezekiel thus inculcated a newer and more spiritual conception of religion, and sketched the principles of the future theocracy. The future community should be a Church ; God Himself should dwell in their midst. In virtue of his teaching and of his example, of his practical demonstration, and ideal conception of the true religion, Ezekiel was one of the founders of Judaism.

His book, unlike that of most of the prophets, is arranged in chronological order. Three divisions are clearly marked,

(a) Chaps. i.–xxiv. (592–586 B.C.). Before the fall of the Temple Ezekiel hastens to dispel the notion, to which the exiles around him and the remnant yet in the capital still clung, that the worst was over. He denounces the false prophets who fostered this illusion. The end was yet to come. To all, and especially to those who complained that God's attitude towards them was unjust, he explains that these calamities are the inevitable outcome of disbelief and sin. Each individual is responsible to himself and God. The present generation is *not* blameless. The righteous are *not* now suffering for the past iniquity of the unrighteous. That problem which had recently vexed Habakkuk, and which was yet to be discussed in the books of Job and Ecclesiastes—the problem of the sufferings of the *righteous*—is beside the point now. The exiles deserve their chastisement.

(b) Chaps. xxv.–xxxii. Jehovah is God not only of Israel but of all the world. Those proud nations who have exulted over the fallen Hebrews shall be judged and humbled. “They had done despite to the people of Him who was God alone, and were injurious to the one living God.”

(c) Chaps. xxxiii.–xlviii. God will restore Israel, and re-establish a divine kingdom in which He Himself will dwell. Personal holiness will be an essential note of the ministers of this regenerate community, this visible church.¹

A characteristic passage from each of these three divisions of the prophecy is here printed.

¹ For Ezekiel see Davidson, *Cambridge Bible*; Stanley, *Jewish Church*, vol. ii., 482–93; Ottley, *The Hebrew Prophets*, pp. 62–70; *History of the Hebrews*, pp. 222–5.

(a) INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY. GOD IS JUST

Ezekiel xviii

1. The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying,
 2. What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? 3. As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. 4. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

His dealings with (a) the just man.—5. But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, 6. and hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, 7. and hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; 8. he that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, 9. hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD.

(b) *The just man's wicked son.*—10. If he beget a son that is a robber, a shedder of blood, and that doeth the like to any one of these things, 11. and that doeth not any of those duties, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, 12. hath oppressed the poor and needy,

6. eaten upon the mountains, *i.e.* joined in the sacrificial feasts to idols on the mountains.

hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination, 13. hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase : shall he then live ? he shall not live : he hath done all these abominations ; he shall surely die ; his blood shall be upon him.

(c) *The wicked man's just son.*—14. Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like, 15. that hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, 16. neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, 17. that hath taken off his hand from the poor, that hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes ; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live. 18. As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did that which is not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity.

(d) *The repentant sinner.*—19. Yet say ye, Why ? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father ? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. 20. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son : the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. 21. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath

committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

22. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him : in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. 23. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die ? saith the Lord God : and not that he should return from his ways, and live ?

(e) *The good man degenerating.*—24. But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live ? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned : in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

In all this he is just.—25. Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel ; Is not my way equal ? are not your ways unequal ? 26. When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them ; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. 27. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. 28. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. 29. Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal ? are not your ways unequal ?

30. Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel,

25. equal = equitable, just.

every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions ; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. 31. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed ; and make you a new heart and a new spirit : for why will ye die, O house of Israel ?

32. For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God : wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

(b) THE PRIDE OF THE NATIONS—AS TYRE—MUST BE
HUMBLED BEFORE ME, WHO AM LORD OF ALL

Ezekiel xxviii. 1-10

1. The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,
2. Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord God ; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas ; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God : 3. behold, thou art wiser than Daniel ; there is no secret that they can hide from thee : 4. with thy wisdom and with thine understanding -thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures : 5. by thy great

2. **Son of Man.** " In presence of the transcendent majesty of Jehovah, the crowning virtue of man is humility. Hence Ezekiel always speaks of himself as a *son of man*, an expression which indicates the weakness and nothingness of human nature in comparison with the Creator."—OTTLEY. See also *infra*, p. 221, n.

3. **Daniel.** Needless to repeat, the book of Daniel, as we have it, was unknown to Ezekiel. Nor is it likely that he is referring to the hero of that book, who was a contemporary of his (according to the story). The name was, like that of Job, a great traditional name, typifying wisdom, and was, as has been pointed out, given to the central figure of his story by the compiler of the book of Daniel, for a religious purpose.

wisdom and by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches : 6. therefore thus saith the Lord GOD ; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God ; 7. behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations : and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. 8. They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas. 9. Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God ? but thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee. 10. Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers : for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

(c) A PICTURE SYMBOLISING THE RESURRECTION OF THE CAPTIVES FROM THE DEATH OF EXILE, AND THE FUTURE SANCTIFICATION OF THE NATION BY THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Ezekiel xxxvii

1. The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, 2. and caused me to pass by them round about : and, behold, there were very many in the open valley ; and, lo, they were very dry. 3. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live ? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. 4. Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. 5. Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones ; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live : 6. and

I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD. 7. So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. 8. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.

9. Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. 10. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

11. Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. 12. Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. 13. And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, 14. and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.

The reunion of Israel and Judah at the Restoration.—

15. The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

11. for our parts is merely intensive. "We, for our part indeed, are cut off."

16. Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions : then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions : 17. and join them one to another into one stick ; and they shall become one in thine hand. 18. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these ? 19. say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD ; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.

20. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. 21. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD ; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land : 22. and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel ; and one king shall be king to them all : and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all : 23. neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions : but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them : so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. 24. And David my servant shall be king over them ; and they all shall

24. David. The prophet uses the famous name merely to intend "an ideal sovereign."

have one shepherd : they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. 25. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt ; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever : and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. 26. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them ; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them : and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. 27. My tabernacle also shall be with them : yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 28. And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

(4) THE SECOND ISAIAH

About the year 550 B.C., when Cyrus' fame was growing with his victories, a successor to Ezekiel arose among the Babylonian exiles. "The great unnamed" prophet, as he has been called, whose voice is perhaps the strongest and most beautiful that is heard in all the Old Testament Scriptures, brought a "word of consolation" to his countrymen. Restoration to their home was no longer doubtful ; it was certain.

The message of this prophet is contained in the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah, with whose work it had become amalgamated, either through the carelessness of early copyists, or else owing to a definite error on the part of the Jewish editor, who was misled by the likeness in style between the writing of the eighth century prophet

and that of the unnamed prophet of the exile. "Similar instances of agglomerating several works under the same name are to be found, probably in the Prophecies of Zechariah, certainly in the Psalter of David."¹

(a) First he proclaims the deliverance from captivity in the near future. Jehovah is omnipotent: that is the great truth to be realised. He will bring His gracious purpose to fulfilment.

(b) Next he announces that the instrument of their release is to be Cyrus—a Gentile prince, not even a Semite! This is a further proof of God's supremacy over all the world, and points, too, to the comprehensive character of His future Church: it shall be for *all* peoples.

(c) Thirdly, the prophet declares the theological doctrine of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah. In the first place this Suffering Servant is Israel, through whom a blessing shall be brought by God upon the world. But presently the language changes. The servant is an *individual* who shall fulfil the whole purpose of God to the world. He is one in whom not only Israel, but the human race, shall find salvation. He shall die for the sins of others.

From the experiences of his nation the inspired prophet has learnt the principle of vicarious suffering. Nearly six centuries later his prophetic picture was realised on Calvary.

We cannot forbear to quote from one of the most enlightened and enlightening of modern theologians upon this subject. "The idea of vicarious suffering and substitution of the innocent for the guilty, whereby the guilty

¹ Stanley, *op. cit.*, ii. 500, where also see an interesting and useful essay on the authorship of the books of the Old Testament and its bearing on their religious value.

are redeemed from their sin, is to be traced, not to those animal sacrifices of the Levitical ritual, but rather to the nobler source of human vicariousness and its virtue, as learned by Israel from their own experience, and idealised in the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, whose prototypes are Jeremiah and the righteous remnant. In such human instances we get the ethical truth of vicariousness, red with the blood of real life. In the animal sacrifices the expression of the idea is largely mechanical. . . . If we are to get our fellows to believe in the redemptive virtue of Christ's Cross it will be by proving to them that vicarious suffering and its ethical virtue are no arbitrary enactment of God, but natural to life and inevitable wherever sin and holiness, guilt and love, encounter and contend. . . . And in this we shall succeed most readily by proving, as we can do from the history we have been traversing, that the figure of a Sufferer, holy and undefiled, by whose stripes we are healed, by whose bearing of our iniquities we are justified, was desired and confidently expected by men, not because Heaven had arbitrarily proclaimed it, but out of their own experiences of life and death, the very elements of which provided them with their marvellous picture of Him."¹

(a) SOON SHALL THE MOURNING OF CAPTIVITY BE
CHANGED TO JOY IN JERUSALEM AGAIN

Isaiah xl. 1-18

1. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.
2. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her,

¹ G. Adam Smith, *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, pp. 170-2. See also the same writer's *Book of Isaiah* vol. ii., chap. 20 ; and Ottley, *Hebrew Prophets*, pp. 72-5.

that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned : for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins. 3. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 4. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low : and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain : 5. and the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together : for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. 6. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry ? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field : 7. the grass withereth, the flower fadeth : because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it : surely the people is grass. 8. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth : but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

9. O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain ; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength ; lift it up, be not afraid ; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God ! 10. Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him : behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. 11. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd : he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

FOR JEHOVAH IS GOD OF ALL THE WORLD

12. Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance ?

13. Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? 14. With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? 15. Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. 16. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. 17. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. 18. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

A MESSAGE OF HOPE

Isaiah lii. 1-10

1. Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. 2. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. 3. For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money. 4. For thus saith the Lord GOD, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause. 5. Now therefore, what do I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed. 6. Therefore my people shall know

my name ; therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak : behold, it is I.

7. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation ; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth !

8. Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice ; with the voice together shall they sing : for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion. 9. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem : for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. 10. The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations ; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Isaiah lxi. 1-3

1. The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me ; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek ; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ; 2. to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God ; to comfort all that mourn ; 3. to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

(b) THE COMING OF CYRUS

Isaiah xli. 25 ; xlv. 24, 28 ; xlv. 1-4

xli. 25. I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come : from the rising of the sun shall he call upon

my name : and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay. xlv. 24. Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, 28. that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure : even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built ; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

xlvi. 1. Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him ; and I will loose the loins of kings ; to open the doors before him, and the gates shall not be shut ; 2. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight : I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron : 3. and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. 4. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name : I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

(c) THE SUFFERING SERVANT

(i) *Israel*

Isaiah xlii. 1-4, 6, 7

1. Behold my servant, whom I uphold ; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth ; I have put my spirit upon him : he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. 2. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. 3. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench : he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. 4. He shall not fail nor be

1. loose the loins of, *i.e.* humble.

discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth : and the isles shall wait for his law.

6. I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles ;
7. to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

(ii) The Sufferer

Isaiah lii. 13-15 and liii

Strophe i

lii. 13. Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

14. As many were astonished at thee ; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men :

15. So shall he sprinkle many nations ; the kings shall shut their mouths at him ; for that which had not been told them shall they see ; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

Strophe ii

liii. 1. Who hath believed our report ? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed ?

2. For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground : he hath no form nor

15. *sprinkle* is a false translation. It should read "startle."

1, 2. "Which of us gave credence to that which we heard ? to which of us was the Lord's purpose—the hand He had in His Servant's sufferings—revealed ? (We disregarded the Servant) because he sprang like a sapling before Jehovah, as a root," etc. It is the penitents, who have been preached to, that are now represented as speaking.

comeliness ; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

3. He is despised and rejected of men ; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief : and we hid as it were our faces from him ; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Strophe iii

4. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows : yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed.

6. All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way ; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Strophe iv

7. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth : he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8. He was taken from prison and from judgment : and who shall declare his generation ? for he was cut off out of the land of the living : for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death ; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

5. *chastisement*, *i.e.* the peace is ours, thanks to the chastisement which he has borne to procure it for us.

8. " By tyranny and law (*i.e.* by judicial murder) was he taken ; and who of his contemporaries reflected that he was cut off (prematurely and violently) from the land of the living ? " etc.

9. *rich*, *i.e.* wicked. Others translate " felon."

Strophe v

10. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him ; he hath put him to grief ; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

11. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied : by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many ; for he shall bear their iniquities.

12. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great and he shall divide the spoil with the strong ; because he hath poured out his soul unto death : and he was numbered with the transgressors : and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

10. " Yet Jehovah had purposed that His Servant should suffer, in order that when he had made a guilt offering with his own life—*i.e.* by vicarious suffering—he might ' see his seed,' *i.e.* really find himself in others, and win the highest kind of life." ¹

¹ Adapted from G. Adam Smith, *Isaiah*, vol. ii., chap. xx.

PART III

THE RETURN OF THE EXILES

THE RETURN. INTRODUCTORY

(a) UNDER ZERUBBABEL

538 B.C.

THE story of the return of the exiles to their native land and the restoration of their capital and its Temple, divides itself into three episodes: (a) The expedition under Zerubbabel; (b) the arrival of a small caravan under Ezra; (c) the visits of Nehemiah. There is a wealth of prophetic literature dealing with this and the subsequent periods. Haggai and Zechariah can be dated exactly in the years from 520–518 B.C. Malachi is placed at about 433 B.C., between the two visits of Nehemiah. The prophecies of Obadiah and Joel, though incorporating earlier work, are most authoritatively assigned to the period between Ezra's work at Jerusalem and the time of Alexander the Great, and illustrate the relations of Israel to the surrounding nations after the re-establishment of the Jewish Commonwealth. For the history of the Persian Empire and the powers which henceforward came into close contact with the Hebrews we have plentiful records in the works of secular historians and in the monuments. But the books of Ezra and Nehemiah are the only source from which we can learn the details of the story of the restoration and the troubles of the rehabilitated community at Jerusalem. Originally a continuation of the Books of Chronicles, these two works were compiled from (a) memoirs

of the doings of Ezra and Nehemiah, (b) official documents, (c) an historical treatise dealing with these times, written in the Aramaic dialect. It would seem that the compiler was a priest living late in the post-Exilic period.¹ One of the results of the dispersion of the Hebrews was, it is important to observe, the substitution of Aramaic, the dialect of Syria, for their ancient Hebrew tongue, as the language of common use. From the Mediterranean to the Euphrates Aramaic was the ordinary commercial and official language. Henceforward the old Hebrew grew to be more and more confined to liturgical and scholastic uses. By the time of our Lord it was no more understood by the masses, though still employed in the services of the Church, than Latin is in the Roman Catholic countries of to-day. Aramaic survived as the national tongue, though its position was for a time disputed by the Greek language, until it was eventually superseded by the Arabic, which still prevails in Palestine.²

¹ The Greek additions to the book of Ezra, which are embraced in the Apocrypha under the title of 1st and 2nd Book of Esdras, are of little value. The 1st book of Esdras, except for a passage recounting a legend of Zerubbabel's youth, is merely a congeries of extracts from Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. The 2nd book of Esdras is an Apocalypse dating from the end of the 1st century A.D.

² Ryle, however (*Camb. Bible*, Ezra and Nehemiah, *passim*), will not allow that Aramaic became the vernacular tongue of the Hebrews until a considerably later date than the days of Nehemiah. He says this idea arose from the erroneous notion that the exiles returned from Babylon speaking the Babylonian or Assyrian dialect, which was called Chaldee. True, they did not. But the real error consists in misapplying the term Chaldee to the Syrian or Aramaic dialect which, it appears, the Jews did speak on their return. The old mistake lay, not in supposing that the Jews spoke a new dialect, but in calling this new dialect, which was really Aramaic, by the name Chaldee, which suggested the Assyrian or Babylonian dialect, quite different from Aramaic. He who says, or used to say, that the Hebrews now spoke Chaldee is wrong; he who says that they spoke Aramaic is most probably right. Does not Dr. Ryle confuse the mistaken application of *terms* with a probably unmis-taken statement of *facts*?

In order to fix the order of events clearly in his memory the reader will find it helpful to refer to the list of Persian kings, the successive suzerains of the Israelitish people, given in the Chronological Table.

Cyrus's reasons for permitting the captives to reorganise in their native land were, probably, political and self-interested. There is no ground for supposing that he had any sympathy with the religion of the Jews. He was not even a Zoroastrian monotheist, as has been supposed, like the Persians. He was an Elamite and a polytheist, yet he was employed by God as a gracious instrument for accomplishing His purpose ; so that the second Isaiah, indeed, calls him the Lord's " anointed," and " shepherd." His motives presumably were : (1) to get rid of one of the disaffected elements in his empire by gratifying the Jewish ambitions ; (2) to secure by this means upon the remote borders of his domains a people bound to him by ties of gratitude ; (3) to maintain a friendly " buffer " state on the borders of Egypt, especially with a view to the invasion of that country.¹

CYRUS AUTHORISES THE RETURN OF THE JEWS AND THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

Ezra i.

1. Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be

¹ Ottley, p. 229, and Sayce, *Introd. to Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther*, where the inscriptions dealing with these events are quoted.

1. **first year** = the first year of Cyrus' domination over Babylon, 538 B.C. The reference is to Jer. xxv. 12 and xxix. 10. In the passages of Jeremiah referred to the duration of the exile is spoken of as seventy years. In fact, many of the captives had been transplanted to Babylon in 597 and returned in 538, after a lapse of fifty-nine years. But the official duration of the Captivity, in the eyes of the compiler of these books, was the seventy years between the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 and the dedication of the second Temple, 516 B.C.

fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 2. Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. 4. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

5. Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem. 6. And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered.

7. Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods; 8. even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and num-

2. Jehovah, God of heaven, etc. Cyrus recognises the God of Israel by His name as the greatest of gods.

4. the freewill offering = voluntary contributions.

7. *I.e.* in 597 B.C., when Jehoiachin and 10,000 men were transported (2 Kings xxiv. 13). The rest of the Temple treasures were taken away in 586 B.C. See *supra*, pp. 35-38.

bered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. 9. And this is the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives, 10. thirty basons of gold, silver basons of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand. 11. All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up with them of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.

Ezra ii. 64-70

64. The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore, 65. beside their servants and their maids, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: and there were

8. **Sheshbazzar.** It is best to consider Sheshbazzar as identical with Zerubbabel, though by some he is thought to be a Persian or Babylonian official appointed to superintend the migration of the Jews. Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, is a descendant of David.

9. **chargers**= simply vessels, or measures. The exact meaning of the word is disputed by scholars.

65. The total number of those that returned home to their cities in Palestine under Zerubbabel was, then, just under 50,000. This is only a small portion of the children of the Captivity, who were scattered in many quarters of the Persian dominions. Sayce (*Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther*, p. 18) supposes that the numbers cited in the text are only those of heads of families. If so, the total number of immigrants would have been over 200,000. But in Neh. vii. 4 (below, p. 178), we find a complaint that the inhabitants of Jerusalem were few. It is true that a large proportion of the immigrants settled in the country districts, and that Nehemiah adopted measures to attract them to the capital. But by his time not only would the population have increased in the order of nature, but it had been reinforced by Ezra's band and others. It would be unlikely, then, that with a population of 200,000 all told to start with, nearly a hundred years previously (538-445), the city would still be depopulated. Nehemiah's lament is more intelligible on the understanding that in these 50,000 are included the entire body of incomers, and not only the heads of families. A census of heads of families at Jerusalem given in chap. xi. of Nehemiah—even if its figures were clear and certain, which they are not—does **not supply sufficient data to settle this question with confidence.**

among them two hundred singing men and singing women.

66. Their horses were seven hundred thirty and six ; their mules, two hundred forty and five ; 67. their camels, four hundred thirty and five ; their asses, six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

68. And some of the chief of the fathers, when they came to the house of the LORD which is at Jerusalem, offered freely for the house of God to set it up in his place : 69. they gave after their ability unto the treasure of the work threescore and one thousand drams of gold, and five thousand pound of silver, and one hundred priests' garments. 70. So the priests, and the Levites, and some of the people, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, dwelt in their cities, and all Israel in their cities.

FOUNDATION OF THE SECOND TEMPLE, 536 B.C.

Ezra iii.

1. And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem. 2. Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God. 3. And they set the altar upon his bases ; for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries : and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD,

70. **Nethinims.** These are " slaves devoted to the service of the priests " (Ottley). Their origin is obscure.

1. **the seventh month** = Tishri, October.

2. The offerings for this first day of the seventh month (the Feast of Trumpets) are described in Num. xxix. 1-6.

3. **bases, i.e.** " on its base," or " in its place."

even burnt offerings morning and evening. 4. They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required ; 5. and afterward offered the continual burnt offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a free-will offering unto the LORD. 6. From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD. But the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not yet laid. 7. They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters ; and meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa, according to the grant that they had of Cyrus king of Persia.

8. Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem ; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD. 9. Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together,

4. **feast of tabernacles** (Lev. xxiii. 34-43). Also called the "feast of ingathering." It is akin to our "harvest festival." One of its chief features was the custom of living in booths made from branches of trees, by which the wanderings in the wilderness were commemorated. The festival lasted eight days, on each of which, after Nehemiah's time, a portion of the Law was read.

burnt offerings (*see* Num. xxix. 12-38, etc.).

5. After keeping the Feast of Tabernacles they restored (i) the daily morning and evening sacrifice ; (ii) the offerings at the new moon ; (iii) the offerings at all set feasts, such as Passover, Day of Atonement, etc. ; (iv) occasional voluntary offerings.

to set forward the workmen in the house of God : the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites. 10. And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. 11. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD ; because he is good, for His mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. 12. But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice ; and many shouted aloud for joy : 13. so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people : for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

INTERRUPTION OF THE WORK OWING TO THE OPPOSITION OF THE SAMARITANS, 536-520 B.C.

Ezra iv. 1-5, 24

1. Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin

1. **the adversaries.** These are the Samaritans, the origin of whose hostility to the Jews is here explained. The haughty refusal of their request to be allowed to co-operate in the restoration of the national sanctuary exhibits the growing exclusiveness of the Judaistic spirit which had originated at Babylon. In the name of the "Samaritans" are "included (1) the foreign colonists who were introduced by Sargon in 722 (2 Kings xvii. 24), and at a later time by Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal (Asnapper) ; (2) The remnant of Israelites who were not carried away after the fall of Samaria, but who under the pressure of foreign immigration had fallen into idolatrous practices, though they still nominally worshipped Jehovah" (Otley).

heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the LORD God of Israel ; 2. then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you : for we seek your God, as ye do ; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither. 3. But Zerubbabel and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God ; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us. 4. Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, 5. and hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

24. Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

ZERUBBABEL CONTINUES THE TEMPLE-BUILDING

520 B.C.

Ezra v

1. Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in

24. The work is interrupted for sixteen years, during which Cyrus died (529), and was eventually succeeded (521) by Darius Hystaspes. It was the vigorous exhortation of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, as we shall see in the next chapter, which roused the disheartened people to renew their efforts.

Vv. 6-23 of this chapter are misplaced. They belong to the reign of Artaxerxes, and have, therefore, been remitted to their proper context after ch. x. The compiler has massed together, regardless of chronological sequence, various records of opposition to the Jews occurring in various reigns.

1. For Haggai and Zechariah see pp. 141-151.

136 OPPOSITION TO THE TEMPLE-BUILDING

Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them. 2. Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem : and with them were the prophets of God helping them.

3. At the same time came to them Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shethar-boznai, and their companions, and said thus unto them, Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall ? 4. Then said they unto them after this manner, What are the names of the men that make this building ? 5. But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius : and then they returned answer by letter concerning this matter.

His opponents send a letter to Darius, 518-517 B.C.—

6. The copy of the letter that Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shethar-boznai, and his companions the Apharsachites, which were on this side the river, sent unto Darius the king : 7. they sent a letter unto him, wherein was written thus ; Unto Darius the king, all peace. 8. Be it known unto the king, that we went into the province of Judea, to the house of the great God, which is builded with great stones, and timber is laid in the walls, and this work goeth fast on, and prospereth in their hands. 9. Then

3. Tatnai was satrap of the whole district of Syria and Cilicia, west of the Euphrates. He would be superior to Zerubbabel, who was only a local ruler of Jerusalem and its environs. Shethar-boznai was possibly his secretary ; or, as is more likely, he was local governor of Samaria.

From the accounts of Darius' reign in the inscriptions we can conclude that Tatnai's letter could not have been sent until 518-517 B.C. By this time the Israelites would have made good progress with the work.

asked we those elders, and said unto them thus, Who commanded you to build this house, and to make up these walls? 10. We asked their names also, to certify thee, that we might write the names of the men that were the chief of them. 11. And thus they returned us answer, saying, We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house that was builded these many years ago, which a great king of Israel builded and set up. 12. But after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath, He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon. 13. But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon the same king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God. 14. And the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple of Babylon, those did Cyrus the king take out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered unto one, whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor; 15. and said unto him, Take these vessels, go, carry them into the temple that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be builded in his place. 16. Then came the same Sheshbazzar, and laid the foundation of the house of God which is in Jerusalem: and since that time even until now hath it been in building, and yet it is not finished. 17. Now therefore, if it seem good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which is there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter.

Ezra vi

Darius finds the former decree of Cyrus.—1. Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon. 2. And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein was a record thus written: 3. In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits; 4. with three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let the expences be given out of the king's house: 5. and also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to his place, and place them in the house of God.

And replies sharply.—6. Now therefore, Tatnai, governor beyond the river, Shethar-boznai, and your companions the Apharsachites, which are beyond the river, be ye far from thence: 7. let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place. 8. Moreover I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these

2. *Achmetha* = Ecbatana, the summer residence of the Persian court. In the winter they migrated to Susa. Ecbatana is about 300 miles N.E. of Babylon, in the cool climate of the inland mountains.

6. *be ye far from thence*, *i.e.* keep away from Jerusalem, and do not obstruct the building.

Jews for the building of this house of God : that of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expences be given unto these men, that they be not hindered. 9. And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests which are at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail : 10. that they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons. 11. Also I have made a decree, that whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon ; and let his house be made a dunghill for this. 12. And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there destroy all kings and people, that shall put to their hand to alter and to destroy this house of God which is at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree ; let it be done with speed.

Completion and dedication of the Temple, 516 B.C.—

13. Then Tatnai, governor on this side the river, Shetharboznai, and their companions, according to that which Darius the king had sent, so they did speedily. 14. And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius king of Persia. 15. And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

16. And the children of Israel, the priests, and the

Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy, 17. and offered at the dedication of this house of God an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs ; and for a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. 18. And they set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God, which is at Jerusalem ; as it is written in the book of Moses. 19. And the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month. 20. For the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them were pure, and killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. 21. And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the LORD God of Israel, did eat, 22. and kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy : for the Lord had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

18. The distribution of the duties of priests and Levites, according to which service of a week at a time was demanded of the different courses or divisions of these ministers, is described in 1 Chron. xxiii. *seq.*, and in Num. iii. and viii. David had divided the priests, the descendants of Aaron, into twenty-four courses, each of which was on duty for a week at a time. After the Exile only four of these courses returned to Jerusalem. Therefore these four were again sub-divided into the original number of twenty-four. This arrangement is alluded to in the first chapter of St. Luke, with reference to Zachariah, and it remained unaltered until the fall of the city in A.D. 70.

19. the first month, *i.e.* Nisan, or April.

22. the king of Assyria. The writer means the king of Persia, there being no kingdom of Assyria now.

THE PROPHECIES OF HAGGAI AND ZECHARIAH

520-518 B.C.

HAGGAI

It has been already seen, in the historical text of **Ezra**, how the work of the reconstruction of the Temple was due to the insistent warnings of the two prophets Haggai and Zechariah.

Haggai's prophetic deliverances are comprised in two short chapters. On four separate occasions during the year 520 B.C. he appears to have come forward with a divinely inspired message to the leaders and the people. His message was effectual.

In style Haggai is eminently prosaic, in substance severely practical. He was now an old man, who had seen the glories of the first Temple. His utterances reflect the depression of the restored exiles ; they lack the poetic fire of the earlier prophets, and are proportionately easy of comprehension.

(a) BUILD THE TEMPLE : THUS YOU SHALL PROSPER

Haggai i

1. In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying, 2. Thus speaketh the

1. second year, sixth month = September, 520 B.C.

1. Joshua is the same as the Jeshua mentioned in the book of **Ezra**.

LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built. 3. Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, 4. Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? 5. Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. 6. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.

7. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. 8. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD. 9. Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. 10. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. 11. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

12. Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD. 13. Then spoke Haggai the LORD's messenger in the LORD's

6. "Your lack of physical prosperity is directly due to your religious negligence" (*cf.* also vv. 9-11).

message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the LORD. 14. And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people ; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, 15. in the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

(b) JEHOVAH'S PROMISE SHALL BE FULFILLED

Haggai ii. 1-9

1. In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying, 2. Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people saying, 3. Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory ? and how do ye see it now ? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing ? 4. Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD ; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest ; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work : for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts : 5. according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you : fear ye not. 6. For thus saith the LORD of hosts : Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and

6. The "shaking" of the heavens and earth means the political convulsions which were to ensue before the coming of Christ—the overthrow of the Persian rule by Alexander, followed by the disruption of Alexander's Empire under his successors ; the struggles of the Maccabees ; the wars of Syria and Egypt ; and the domination of Rome. O.T. prophecy repeatedly employs the imagery of disturbances in the order of physical nature—earth-

the sea, and the dry land ; 7. and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come : and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. 8. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts. 9. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts : and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.

(c) PROSPERITY SHALL BE THE REWARD OF YOUR
OBEDIENCE

Haggai ii. 10-19

10. In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, 11. Thus saith the LORD of hosts ; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, 12. If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and

quake, eclipse, falling stars, dissolution of the heavens—to portray the majesty and terror of God's visitations of the peoples of the earth. A prophet, in holding this language, is not predicting any unusual behaviour in the phenomena of nature, but drawing an imaginative, metaphorical picture of the greatness of God's dealings with men. Such language of the O.T. prophets was caught up by the teachers of our Lord's time and by our Lord Himself, and was consequently used in the N.T. in precisely the same sense as in the O.T., especially in the passages relating to the coming of the Son of Man. See Isa. xiii. 10 ; Joel ii. 30 ; Mark xiii. 24—and Gould's note *ad. loc.*, p. 250, in *International Critical Commentary*, St. Mark.

7. the desire. This means (as R.V.) "the desirable things," *i.e.* all nations shall bring their precious gifts to the Temple. This was fulfilled by the gifts of the Persian kings, of Herod the Great, and other princes, to this or to the next Temple.

12. The argument is : A robe is made "holy" if consecrated flesh is carried in it (Lev. vi. 27) ; but if that same robe were to touch other food as the wearer passed, this food is *not* thereby made "holy." On the other hand, if any one is "unclean," his mere touch does render other objects also "unclean." The moral is : a little holiness does not go far, but a little uncleanness is far-reaching in its effects. "Your partial conformity to religious rule has less power for good than your great remissness and carelessness has for evil. Therefore, amend your ways."

with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. 13. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. 14. Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean. 15. And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD: 16. since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten; when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty. 17. I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD. 18. Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid, consider it. 19. Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.

(d) JEHOVAH'S PROMISE TO ZERUBBABEL

Haggai ii. 20-23

20. And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying, 21. Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; 22. and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the

16. pressfat = wine-vat.

strength of the kingdoms of the heathen ; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them ; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. 23. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet : for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.

ZECHARIAH

Zechariah was a young man whose preaching was contemporaneous with that of the aged Haggai (520 B.C.). Like his elder contemporary, he strongly urged the continuation of the Temple-building with confidence on the part of the people ; but, unlike him, he added further teaching upon the future destinies of the nation, especially the coming of the Messiah, by means of which he greatly relieved the spirit of depression which prevailed, and infused the courage of hope. 520 B.C. is the date of chaps. i.-vi., and 518 B.C. that of chaps. vii. and viii.

The utterances of this prophet, "the St. John of the Old Testament," are couched in a series of visions, each of which is symbolic of some feature in the life of the people, or of some event destined to fulfilment in the future. Among the subjects of the prophet's discourse are the certainty of God's promises, the universality of His power, the divine protection of Jerusalem, the purification of the priesthood as an instrument for further blessings, the value of obedience as opposed to ceremonial observance, and the redemption of the Gentiles—this last being a lesson

23. a signet. Cf. Ecclesiasticus xlix. 11: "Zerubbabel was as a signet on the right hand," *i.e.* he was a valuable and powerful instrument for good in the hand of Jehovah.

which the Hebrews had not yet appreciated even by our Lord's time, in spite of its frequent reiteration by the mouth of the prophets.

Zechariah's prophecy is contained in chaps. i.-viii. The other six chapters (ix.-xiv.) which are included under his name in our Bibles belong unquestionably to other dates, and another voice than his. Chaps. ix.-xi. are ascribed by scholars to a prophet of the time of Isaiah (about 730 B.C.), and the remaining three chapters to a preacher either in the age of Jeremiah or of a later epoch (4th century). They were added to our present book by a similar mistake to that which coupled the unnamed prophet of the captivity to Isaiah (see above, p. 115). The student must not be tempted to underrate the value of these chapters on account of our ignorance of their authorship. (See Stanley, *op. cit.*, vol. ii., pp. 501-506.)

(a) THE TRIAL OF JOSHUA, THE HIGH PRIEST

Zechariah iii. 1-8

In this picture " we see the spiritual representative of the people first arraigned and then pardoned—an emblem of the change by which Zion's humiliation shall be turned into a condition of glory and favour " (Ottley).

1. And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. 2. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan ; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee : is not this a brand plucked out of the fire ? 3. Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. 4. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying,

4. those that stand before him. In the vision God, or His angel, bids Joshua's friends, that is the other priests, to disrobe their chief.

Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. 5. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by. 6. And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying, 7. Thus saith the LORD of hosts ; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by. 8. Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee : for they are men wondered at : for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.

(b) THE CROWNING OF JOSHUA

Zechariah vi. 9, 11-13, 15

The crowning of Joshua by the prophet does not form part of his visions, but is a symbolic act which Zechariah is commanded to perform. By this act he presents the high priest before the people as a visible type of the Messiah. Strangers, too, and the other exiled Hebrews that were still afar, should acknowledge this symbolic foreshadowing of the Christ by coming to help to build the Temple.

9. And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 11. Take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest ; 12. and speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is

7. that stand by, *i.e.* angels, with whom he shall have access to God's presence.

8. Joshua and the other priests are signs or types (men wondered at) of Him who is to be the Branch, namely, the promised Messiah.¹

¹ See Farrar's *Minor Prophets*, from which, with Ottley, the notes to these passages are drawn.

The BRANCH ; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD. 13. Even he shall build the temple of the LORD ; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne ; and he shall be a priest upon his throne : and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. 15. And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the LORD, and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.

(c) THE RESTORATION OF JERUSALEM

Zechariah viii. 1-17

A beautiful picture of the prosperity which waits upon kindness and obedience, in the restored city.

1. Again the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, 2. Thus saith the LORD of hosts ; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury. 3. Thus saith the LORD ; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem : and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth ; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain.

Boys and girls shall play in the streets of Jerusalem.—

4. Thus saith the LORD of hosts ; There shall yet old men

13. both. This is a difficulty. It means, apparently, that (a) the Messianic offices of priest and king are, in Zechariah's view, not united in one person, but that priest and king share the throne together, and both are typified by the crowned Joshua ; or (b) the " his " = " Jehovah's " throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between Jehovah and his earthly representative. (c) The textual reading is, however, doubtful. G. Adam Smith (*Book of the Twelve Prophets*, vol. ii., pp. 308-9) gives an attractive explanation based upon a slight emendation of the text in accordance with the suggestions of the LXX reading. It is Zerubbabel who is crowned and Joshua the priest stands at his right hand and assists his peaceful rule.

and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. 5. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. 6. Thus saith the LORD of hosts ; If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes ? saith the LORD of hosts. 7. Thus saith the LORD of hosts ; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country ; 8. and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem : and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.

9. Thus saith the LORD of hosts ; Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets, which were in the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built. 10. For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast ; neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction : for I set all men every one against his neighbour. 11. But now I will not be unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the LORD of hosts. 12. For the seed shall be prosperous ; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew ; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. 13. And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel ; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing : fear not, but let your hands be strong. 14. For thus saith the LORD of hosts ; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hosts, and I repented not : 15. so

again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah : fear ye not.

16. These are the things that ye shall do ; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour ; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates : 17. and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour ; and love no false oath : for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD.

THE RETURN OF THE EXILES (*continued*)

(b) UNDER EZRA

458 B.C.

With the rebuilding of their Temple the Hebrews entered upon a period of their national history very different from that of the past. They were no longer a nation, but a church. Judaism swiftly developed its peculiar features. Subject to the over-lordship of the Persian king and his satraps, the immediate rulers of the community were now the high priest and his hierarchy of priests. Now for the first time the hereditary successor of Aaron becomes, no longer the priest, but the high priest, the supreme head of an ecclesiastical dynasty.¹ The other priests were distributed again into the twenty-four courses or families, which David had instituted. Though there is a gap of some 58 years (516–458 B.C) in the historical records, the prophecy of Malachi (433 B.C.) discloses an unhappy picture of the restored people. Faith grew feeble ; ecclesiasticism was deemed oppressive ; indignation and despondency assumed a rebellious aspect. The Law was

¹ See G. Adam Smith, *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, p. 173.

disregarded ; strange wives were taken from heathen homes. At the same time a stricter party of zealots tried to stem the decline by insisting on a rigorous observance of religious duty as the only method of realising Jehovah's promises. To them it was not God, but His people, who were failing to play their part.

At length, disquieted by the gloomy reports which continually reached Babylon, Ezra obtained permission from Artaxerxes to visit Jerusalem. His project was materially supported by the monarch, who from political motives perhaps desired to conciliate the Jews still scattered throughout his inland provinces, and to consolidate that department of his empire in which the main body of the Hebrew nation was concentrated. Ezra's intention was to reinvigorate the religious life of the community by a thorough enforcement of the precepts contained in the book of the Law, that is, the Pentateuch. It is probably to be inferred from the sudden and dramatic interruption of Ezra's memoirs, as well as from the state of affairs revealed in Nehemiah's records, that Ezra's efforts were unsuccessful. He appears to have been equally unfortunate in his attempts to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Still smarting under the insult offered to them by Zerubbabel, the Samaritans used their influence with Artaxerxes to procure his interdict upon their operations. Just as they had obstructed the building of the Temple for sixteen years, so now they destroyed the foundations of the defences of the city. Ezra apparently was forced to retire, and twelve years were to elapse before the mission of Nehemiah brought help and hope again, and achieved such internal reformation in the community as led ultimately to some measure of success.

EZRA'S ARRIVAL AT JERUSALEM, 458 B.C.

Ezra vii. 1, 6-28

1. Now after these things in the reign of Artaxerxes King of Persia, 6. Ezra went up from Babylon; and he

1. Artaxerxes succeeded Xerxes in 465 B.C., and reigned for 40 years.

6. Ezra was a *Zadokite* priest, and a scribe. In captivity he had taken a share in the editing of the "Law of Moses," *i.e.* the Pentateuch. The term "Zadokite priest" is one with which the student of Hebrew history should familiarise himself. At some time between the death of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, and the reign of Solomon, (when precisely is unknown,) the hereditary priesthood, which was afterwards known as the high priesthood, passed from the line of Eleazar, Aaron's eldest son, to that of Ithamar, Aaron's youngest son. Solomon deposed Abiathar, of Ithamar's line, in fulfilment of the doom pronounced on Eli and his sons, and appointed Zadok, of Eleazar's line, in his place. Thus Eleazar's family resumed its privileged position. Henceforward priests of Zadok's house, being descended from the Eleazar branch of Aaron's line, were held in greater respect, and were considered, as it were, more legitimately to continue the Apostolic Succession (to use a modern parallel), than priests who could only trace their ancestry to Aaron through Ithamar's line. Ezekiel, indeed, writing during the Exile, would restrict the priesthood entirely to the Zadokite house. And after the restoration the inferiority of those who could only display the junior escutcheon was in many ways emphasised. The Sadducees¹ of our Lord's time are just Zadokite priests, as even their name implies.

Ezra is designated as a scribe as a mark of honour. He was a typical representative, and in a measure the founder of the later professional body of learned jurisconsults of whom so much is heard in the days of our Lord. In the early period of the Jewish monarchy the scribe was the king's state secretary. This official frequently meets us in the pages of the historical books (*e.g.* Seraiah, Ahijah, Elishama, Gemariah). During the later days of the monarchy the name is particularly applied to those who were occupied in studying and copying the Jewish laws and sacred documents. In the Exile, when the written precept became increasingly important, and when a special stimulus was given to editorial labour upon the literary treasures of the people, the scribe attained still further eminence. His influence, based upon his superior knowledge, eclipsed that of prophet and priest, and largely superseded it. If justification for this evolution of the scribes be needed, it will be found in the existence of the Old Testament Scriptures, which in their final form were for the most part the visible and permanent outcome of their industry. (See Ryle, *Camb. Bib. ad. loc.*, from whom this note is in the main derived.)

¹ See Sanday's *Life of Christ*, p. 9.

was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him. 7. And there went up some of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king. 8. And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king. 9. For upon the first day of the first month began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him. 10. For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

Artaxerxes graciously supports Ezra's mission.—11. Now this is the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, even a scribe of the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of his statutes to Israel. 12. Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect peace, and at such a time. 13. I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee. 14. Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king, and of his seven counsellors, to enquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God which is in thine hand; 15. and to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely offered unto the God of Israel, whose habitation is in Jerusalem, 16. and all

12. at such a time: better "and so forth," "etc." The compiler avoids repeating the lengthy superscription of the letter.

the silver and gold that thou canst find in all the province of Babylon, with the freewill offering of the people, and of the priests, offering willingly for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem : 17. that thou mayest buy speedily with this money bullocks, rams, lambs, with their meat offerings and their drink offerings, and offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which is in Jerusalem. 18. And whatsoever shall seem good to thee, and to thy brethren, to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, that do after the will of your God. 19. The vessels also that are given thee for the service of the house of thy God, those deliver thou before the God of Jerusalem.

And offers financial assistance.—20. And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God, which thou shalt have occasion to bestow, bestow it out of the king's treasure house. 21. And I, even I Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which are beyond the river, that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be done speedily, 22. unto an hundred talents of silver, and to an hundred measures of wheat, and to an hundred baths of wine, and to an hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing how much. 23. Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven : for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons ? 24. Also we certify you, that touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims, or ministers of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them. 25. And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges,

22. bath. This equals about 7 gallons.

which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God ; and teach ye them that know them not. 26. And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.

EZRA'S THANKSGIVING

27. Blessed be the LORD God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem : 28. and hath extended mercy unto me before the king, and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes. And I was strengthened as the hand of the LORD my God was upon me, and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me.

INCIDENTS OF HIS JOURNEY

Ezra viii. 15, 21-36

After a halt at Ahava.—15. And I gathered them together to the river that runneth to Ahava ; and there abode we in tents three days. 21. Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. 22. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way : because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that

15. *them* = Ezra's companions, about 1600 in number, of whose lineage some account is given in vv. 1-14.

Ahava. One of the settlements of the Jewish captives, on a river of the same name a little to the west of Babylon.

seek him ; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. 23. So we fasted and besought our God for this : and he was intreated of us.

24. Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them, 25. and weighed unto them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, even the offering of the house of our God, which the king, and his counsellors, and his lords, and all Israel there present, had offered : 26. I even weighed unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels an hundred talents, and of gold an hundred talents ; 27. also twenty basons of gold, of a thousand drams ; and two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold. 28. And I said unto them, Ye are holy unto the LORD ; the vessels are holy also ; and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering unto the LORD God of your fathers. 29. Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the LORD. 30. So took the priests and the Levites the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, to bring them to Jerusalem unto the house of our God.

The caravan proceeds.—31. Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem : and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way. 32. And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days.

33. Now on the fourth day was the silver and the gold and the vessels weighed in the house of our God by the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest ; and with him was Eleazar the son of Phinehas ; and with them was

Jozabad the son of Jeshua, and Noadiah the son of Binnui, Levites ; 34. by number and by weight of every one : and all the weight was written at that time. 35. Also the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, offered burnt offerings unto the God of Israel, twelve bullocks for all Israel, ninety and six rams, seventy and seven lambs, twelve he goats for a sin offering : all this was a burnt offering unto the LORD.

36. And they delivered the king's commissions unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors on this side the river : and they furthered the people, and the house of God.

EZRA'S PRAYER AND CONFESSION OF THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE

Ezra ix. 1-15

1. Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. 2. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons : so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands : yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass. 3. And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished. 4. Then

36. on this side the river, *i.e.* west of the Euphrates.

were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away ; and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.

Ezra bewails the foreign marriages and other illegal practices of his countrymen.—5. And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness ; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God, 6. and said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God : for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens. 7. Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day ; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to confusion of face, as it is this day. 8. And now for a little space grace hath been shewed from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.

5. the LORD. When printed thus in capitals in the A.V., and in this edition, the LORD = Jehovah, the proper name of God, which was revealed by Himself to Moses (Exod. vi. 3). The use of this name in the book of Genesis is one of the literary marks, or criteria, by which are distinguished the two principal strands or documents from which the Pentateuch was compiled, the Priestly document and the Jehovistic document. The writer of the former never uses the name Jehovah until the incident of its revelation in Exod. vi. is reached. Contrast *e.g.* Gen. i. (Priestly) with Gen. ii., vers. 4—end (Jehovistic). When printed in small letters, Lord is a translation of a different Hebrew word—Adhonai.

8. The metaphor of the nail is used by Isa. xxii. 23. “ And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place.” The idea is that of a peg (as of a tent) or a nail being securely fastened in the soil or the wall. Here the nail is the restored community which God has firmly fixed in Jerusalem once more.

9. For we were bondmen ; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem. 10. And now, O our God, what shall we say after this ? for we have forsaken thy commandments, 11. which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness. 12. Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever : that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever. 13. And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this ; 14. should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations ? wouldest not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping ? 15. O LORD God of Israel, thou art righteous : for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day : behold, we are before thee in our trespasses : for we cannot stand before thee because of this.

11, 12. There is no passage in the writings of the prophets that have come down to us to which these words precisely refer. The inference is that much of the prophetic literature has never reached us. But the divine command, relative to intercourse with foreign nations, which is here mentioned as the subject of prophetic discourses, is contained in Deut. vii. 2, 3.

THE FOREIGN MARRIAGES ARE BROKEN OFF

Ezra x. 1-17

1. Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children : for the people wept very sore. 2. And Shechaniah, the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land : yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. 3. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God ; and let it be done according to the law. 4. Arise ; for this matter belongeth unto thee : we also will be with thee : be of good courage, and do it. 5. Then arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they should do according to this word. And they sware.

6. Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went unto the chamber of Johanan the son of Eliashib : and when he came thither, he did eat no bread, nor drink water : for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away. 7. And they made proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem unto all the children of the captivity, that they should gather themselves together unto Jerusalem ; 8. and that whosoever would not come within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, all his substance should

be forfeited, and himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away.

Ezra addresses a great assembly at Jerusalem.—9. Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days. It was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month; and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain. 10. And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. 11. Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. 12. Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do. 13. But the people are many, and it is a time of much rain, and we are not able to stand without, neither is this a work of one day or two: for we are many that have transgressed in this thing. 14. Let now our rulers of all the congregation stand, and let all them which have taken strange wives in our cities come at appointed times, and with them the elders of every city, and the judges thereof, until the fierce wrath of our God for this matter be turned from us.

15. Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah were employed about this matter: and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite helped them.

9. *street, i.e.* a broad square or piazza adjoining the house of God.

14–17. The number of foreign marriages was so great that a commission was appointed to investigate the cases; and the work of the commission lasted three months. Verse 15 is mistranslated. It should read, “Nevertheless Jonathan . . . opposed this proposal”; and it marks the first symptoms of that antagonism to Ezra’s reforms which presently proved too strong for him.

16. And the children of the captivity did so. And Ezra the priest, with certain chief of the fathers, after the house of their fathers, and all of them by their names, were separated, and sat down in the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter. 17. And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives by the first day of the first month.

OPPOSITION TO THE PROGRESS OF JERUSALEM BY THE SAMARITANS. ARTAXERXES' DECREE

Ezra iv. 7-23

7. And in the days of Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions, unto Artaxerxes king of Persia ; and the writing of the letter was written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue.

8. Rehum the chancellor and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king in this sort : 9. then wrote Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai

7-9. For the circumstances of the events here related, see introduction to this section, p. 152, last paragraph. The adversaries of Jerusalem whose origin is here mentioned are the inhabitants of Samaria, for whom see p. 134 note. The cities from which they hail, and after which they are here named, are in various parts of Elam, Susiana, and Babylonia. For details see Sayce, *op. cit.*, p. 20. In the text, which is not clear, we have mentioned *two* letters of complaint to the king. (1) In verse 7 a letter is sent by three Samaritans and their friends. (2) In verse 8 another letter is mentioned, the substance of which is given in the sequel. At verse 8 in the original the dialect changes suddenly from Hebrew to Aramaic. Rehum is the local governor of Samaria, as Shethar-boznai had been in the time of Zerubbabel sixty years previously. Shimshai is his secretary, of whose officious ministrations and jealous attentions the governor would have to show his appreciation with what grace he could. It was the policy of the Persian court to establish a system of espionage upon the provincial administrators by means of their subordinate officials.

the scribe, and the rest of their companions ; the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, the Susanchites, the Dehavites, and the Elamites, 10. and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Asnapper brought over, and set in the cities of Samaria, and the rest that are on this side the river, and at such a time.

The Samaritans send a letter asking Artaxerxes to stop the fortification of Jerusalem.—11. This is the copy of the letter that they sent unto him, even unto Artaxerxes the king ; Thy servants the men on this side the river, and at such a time. 12. Be it known unto the king, that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and the bad city, and have set up the walls thereof, and joined the foundations. 13. Be it known now unto the king, that, if this city be builded, and the walls set up again, then will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom, and so thou shalt endamage the revenue of the kings. 14. Now because we have maintenance from the king's palace, and it was not meet for us to see the king's dishonour, therefore have we sent and certified the king ; 15. that search may be made in the book of the records of thy fathers : so shalt thou find in the book of the records, and know that this city is a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time : for which cause was this city destroyed. 16. We certify the king that, if this city be builded again, and the walls thereof set up, by this means thou shalt have no portion on this side the river.

Which, therefore, he does.—17. Then sent the king an answer unto Rehum the chancellor, and to Shimshai the scribe, and to the rest of their companions that dwell in Samaria, and unto the rest beyond the river, Peace, and at such a time. 18. The letter which ye sent unto us hath been plainly read before me. 19. And I commanded, and search hath been made, and it is found that this city of old time hath made insurrection against kings, and that rebellion and sedition have been made therein. 20. There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, which have ruled over all countries beyond the river; and toll, tribute, and custom, was paid unto them. 21. Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease, and that this city be not builded, until another commandment shall be given from me. 22. Take heed now that ye fail not to do this: why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings?

23. Now when the copy of 'king Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power.¹

¹ It is possible that the attempt to fortify the city which is here frustrated should be placed some time between 465-458, *before* the coming of Ezra. There is no indication in the text of the correct chronological sequence of events. But this episode seems more apposite if placed here: thus it leads up naturally to the further efforts in this direction made by Nehemiah on his arrival. Whether this or the other is the correct sequence, in either case Artaxerxes is shown to be inconsistent in his attitude towards the Hebrews. However, one can appreciate the king's change of tone in the present passage from that which he adopts in chap. vii. above, when it is remembered that, though the monarch might look upon the erection of a religious house with indifference, or even sympathy, the establishment of fortifications in a provincial city might be construed by him in a very different light.

THE RETURN OF THE EXILES

(continued)

(c) THE VISITS OF NEHEMIAH

445-432 B.C.

FOR twelve years, 457-445 B.C., there is a gap in our historical records. However, from the account given in Nehemiah's memoirs of the condition of affairs at Jerusalem on his arrival in 445, it is possible to conjecture that the old troubles, which Ezra had in vain tried to combat, were again rife. (See Introduction to Section *b*, p. 151.) Nehemiah, having succeeded in getting himself appointed local governor of Jerusalem with the power of Persia behind him, determined to achieve three ends; (1) the fortification of the city: (2) the religious renovation which Ezra had attempted: (3) social reform. During the twelve years of his first sojourn in the capital, 445-433 B.C., he attained a large measure of success in these endeavours. In 433 he was recalled to Persia for some months. In his absence, released from the control of the master-hand, the disaffected elements in the population once more began to discover the symptoms of anarchy. But swiftly the unbending governor reappeared (433-432), and the last scene which the sacred narrative discloses is that of the stern reinforcement on the part of Nehemiah of those principles of the covenant and of social organisation which he had compelled the people to adopt during his previous tenure of office. In the interval the voice of Malachi had been uplifted in the city on behalf of the cause of law and order.¹ (See below, p. 195.)

¹ A brief outline of the history of the Jews from the close of the Old Testament Canon to the birth of our Lord will be found on p. 233.

NEHEMIAH LAMENTS THE MISERY OF JERUSALEM, 445 B.C.

Nehemiah i. 1-11

1. The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, 2. that Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah ; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. 3. And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach : the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

4. And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven, 5. and said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments : 6. let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee : both I and my father's house have sinned. 7. We have dealt very

1. **Chisleu** = December, the ninth month of the sacred and third of the civil year.

twentieth year, *i.e.* of Artaxerxes, who succeeded in 465 B.C.

Shushan, *i.e.* Susa, the winter capital of the Persian Empire.

2. **the Jews that had escaped**, *i.e.* the Jews now in Judæa, who had survived the captivity and had escaped back to their country : these and their children.

3. Describes the position as recorded in our last extract from Ezra, chap. iv. (p. 165 *supra*).

corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. 8. Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations : 9. but if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them ; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there. 10. Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. 11. O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name : and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

HIS ARRIVAL AT JERUSALEM

Nehemiah ii. 1-20

1. And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him : and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. 2. Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick ? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, 3. and

8. No precise quotation from the "books of Moses," *i.e.* the Pentateuch, is here made by Nehemiah. He makes a general reference to the warnings contained in those books, especially to Deut. xxx. 1-5.

11. this man, *i.e.* the king.

1. Nisan = April. the seventh civil month, 445 B.C.

said unto the king, Let the king live for ever : why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire ? 4. Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request ? So I prayed to the God of heaven. 5. And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. 6. And the king said unto me (the queen also sitting by him), For how long shall thy journey be ? and when wilt thou return ? So it pleased the king to send me ; and I set him a time. 7. Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah ; 8. and a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

On his arrival Nehemiah acts circumspectly owing to Samaritan disaffection. He reconnoitres the walls.—9. Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me.

10. When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the

10. Sanballat is one of the leaders of the Samaritans, and perhaps it is to be inferred that he is now governor of Samaria as Rehum was before him. Though his name implies that he was a descendant of the Assyrians who had been billeted upon the soil of Israel, he seems to hail immediately from Beth-horon on the borders of Ephraim. Tobiah belongs by origin to the Ammonites ; one of those peoples against whom, as against their neighbours the

servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.

11. So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days.
12. And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me ; neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem : neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon. 13. And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire. 14. Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool : but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass. 15. Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed

Moabites, the Jews had ever fostered a keen spirit of racial animosity (see chap. xiii. 1, 2, below). Why he is designated a servant, or slave, is a vexed question. The most plausible theory is that he had once been a slave and was bought by Sanballat, and subsequently was raised to a free position of dignity and usefulness in his master's household.

13. There is still much uncertainty as to the topography of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's time. However, by reference to the map the student will be able to interpret Nehemiah's inspection of the walls as far as our present knowledge permits. He left the city by the valley gate at the west, and went south towards the valley of Hinnom, and continued his circuit keeping the ruined walls on his left hand. By the king's pool, at the south-east corner, he found the mass of rubbish too great to allow his beast to pass. Therefore he descended into the Kidron Valley and thence continued his route northwards ; and, finally, keeping the wall continually on his left worked round to the gate he had started from. Others, less well, explain that by "turned back" (v. 15) he means that he retraced his steps by the way he had come, thus leaving the east and north sides of the city unvisited. Sayce, basing his conclusions on a remarkable inscription discovered in 1880 in a rock tunnel conveying water to the Pool of Siloam, identifies the valley of Hinnom with the Tyropœon valley (see map). Jerusalem thus would be a much smaller city in those days than we have been accustomed to regard it ; its western wall would run just along the eastern slopes of the Tyropœon valley, and run down to the point where this valley meets the valley of Kidron at a sharp angle.

the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned.

16. And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did ; neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work. 17. Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire ; come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. 18. Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me ; as also the king's words, that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work. 19. But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do ? will ye rebel against the king ? 20. Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us ; therefore we his servants will arise and build : but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.

NEHEMIAH CONTINUES THE WALL DESPITE THE
OPPOSITION OF THE SAMARITANS

Nehemiah iv. 1-23

1. But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. 2. And he spake before

18. All the population took a hand in the work under the direction of the heads of families, a list of whom, together with a detailed account of the distribution of the work, is given in chap. iii. of the memoirs.

20. Cf. Ezra iv. 3, p. 135.

his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? 3. Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.

4. Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity: 5. and cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders.

6. So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work. 7. But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, 8. and conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it. 9. Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them. 10. And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall. 11. And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them,

4. 5. The memoirs of Nehemiah are freely interspersed with ejaculatory prayers to God for help and for recognition of his efforts.

10. Those of the inhabitants to whom the duty of carrying up the building material was assigned begin to despair under the magnitude of the task.

and cause the work to cease. 12. And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you.

13. Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. 14. And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them : remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses. 15. And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work.

Nehemiah finds it necessary to arm his labourers, in case of attack.—16. And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons ; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah. 17. They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. 18. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me.

12. Nehemiah is warned of the impending attack of the adversaries by those Jews who lived in the country away from Jerusalem and had got wind of it. He therefore began to make military counter-preparations.

16. **habergeons** are coats, either of mail or leather, worn by way of defensive armour. Each party of workers and fighters is supported by its leader.

19. And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another. 20. In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us. 21. So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared. 22. Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and labour on the day. 23. So neither I, nor my brethren nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, saving that every one put them off for washing.

THE WALL IS COMPLETED IN FIFTY-TWO DAYS

Nehemiah vi. 1-19

1. Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;) 2. that Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. 3. And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and

1. Geshem, or Gashmu, an Arab Sheikh who with his Beduins was ready to run the gauntlet of the Persian police in joining Sanballat in a freebooting attack on Jerusalem.

1-4. Sanballat's party try to entice Nehemiah away from Jerusalem in order to assassinate him. Ono is thirty miles from the city,

come down to you ? 4. Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort ; and I answered them after the same manner. 5. Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand ; 6. wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel : for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words. 7. And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah : and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together. 8. Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart. 9. For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands

Nehemiah, having escaped assassination, succeeds also in thwarting plots to ruin him.—10. Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah the son of Mehetabeel, who was shut up ; and he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple : for they will come to slay thee ; yea, in the night will they come to slay thee. 11. And I said, Should such a man as I flee ? and who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life ? I will not go in. 12. And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him ; but that he pronounced this prophecy against me : for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired

10. The reason why Shemaiah was shut up, *i.e.* confined to his house, is quite obscure. Possibly he was unwell.

12. *against me, i.e.* to oppose me merely, not as a divine message.

him. 13. Therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach me. 14. My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear.

THOUGH OBSTRUCTED EVEN BY A DISAFFECTED PARTY
WITHIN THE CITY ;

15. So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days. 16. And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes : for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.

17. Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came unto them. 18. For there were many in Judah sworn unto him, because he was the son in law of Shechaniah the son of Arah ; and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. 19. Also

13. If Nehemiah were persuaded to take refuge in the Temple, it might seem to lend some colour to the suspicion, which his enemies circulated, that he was aiming at tyranny and was in fear of his life. Furthermore it was against the Law (Num. xviii. 7) for a layman to enter the Temple. Therefore by so doing Nehemiah would have both put himself legally in the wrong and rendered himself unpopular with the priestly party.

15. Ottley aptly compares this achievement with the building of the long walls of Athens under Pericles just ten years before this time (455 B.C.). The schemes of Themistocles by which the city walls of Athens had been built in 478 B.C. after the Persian invasions, in spite of the opposition of Sparta, also occur to the memory in this connection. Indeed the circumstances are closely similar in many particulars. Elul = September.

18. Tobiah and his family, contrary to the law, had been accepted in marriage into the families of the Jewish nobility.

they reported his good deeds before me, and uttered my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear.

AND DEDICATED WITH GREAT JOY

Nehemiah xii. 27-31, 37-41, 43

27. And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps. 28. And the sons of the singers gathered themselves together, both out of the plain country round about Jerusalem, and from the villages of Netophathi; 29. also from the house of Gilgal, and out of the fields of Geba and Azmaveth: for the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem. 30. And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall.

Two processions pass round the walls in opposite directions, starting from the valley gate on the west.—31. Then I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great companies of them that gave thanks, whereof one went on the right hand upon the wall toward the dung gate: 37. and at the fountain gate, which was over against them, they went up by the stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, above the house of David, even unto the water gate eastward. 38. And the other company of them that gave thanks went over against them, and I after them, and the half of the people upon the wall, from beyond the tower of the furnaces even unto the broad wall; 39. and from the gate of Ephraim, and above the old gate,

31 *Seq.* See map of Jerusalem.

and above the fish gate, and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep gate.

And meeting on the east, near the Temple.—And they stood still in the prison gate. 40. So stood the two companies of them that gave thanks in the house of God, and I, and the half of the rulers with me, 41. and the priests. 43. Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced : for God had made them rejoice with great joy : the wives also and the children rejoiced : so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.

HANANI AND HANANIAH ARE APPOINTED GOVERNORS OF JERUSALEM

Nehemiah vii. 1-4; xi. 1, 2

1. Now it came to pass, when the wall was built, and I had set up the doors, and the porters and the singers and the Levites were appointed, 2. that I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem : for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many. 3. And I said unto them, Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot ; and while they stand by, let them shut the doors, and bar them : and appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, every one in his watch, and every one to be over against his house.

4. Now the city was large and great : but the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded.

xi. 1. And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem : the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, and nine parts to dwell

3. stand by. The watch is to stand on guard while the gates are being closed again in the evening.

in other cities. 2. And the people blessed all the men, that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.

NEHEMIAH'S REFORMS

Neh. v. 1-19

(I) *Financial*

(a) *Usury*

1. And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews. 2. For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters, are many : therefore let us get corn for them, that we may eat, and live. 3. Some also there were that said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the dearth. 4. There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards. 5. Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children : and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought unto bondage already : neither is it in our power to redeem them ; for other men have our lands and vineyards.

By persuasion and example Nehemiah checks the oppression of the poor by wealthy money-lenders.—6. And I was very angry when I heard their cry and these words. 7. Then, I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them. 8. And I said unto them, We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which

v. 2, 3. The poor mortgaged their possessions, in order to supply their families with the necessities of life.

were sold unto the heathen ; and will ye even sell your brethren ? or shall they be sold unto us ? Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer. 9. Also I said, It is not good that ye do : ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies ? 10. I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn : I pray you, let us leave off this usury. 11. Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them. 12. Then said they, We will restore them, and will require nothing of them ; so will we do as thou sayest. Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise. 13. Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied. And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD. And the people did according to this promise.

(b) The Governor's Household

14. Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor. 15. But the former governors that had been before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver ; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people : but so did not I, because of the fear

of God. 16. Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall, neither bought we any land : and all my servants were gathered thither unto the work. 17. Moreover there were at my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, beside those that came unto us from among the heathen that are about us. 18. Now that which was prepared for me daily was one ox and six choice sheep ; also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine : yet for all this required not I the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon this people. 19. Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.

(2) *Religious. The Publication of the Law-book and the consequent confession of the sins of the people*

Nehemiah viii. and ix. 1-37

1. And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate ; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. 2. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. 3. And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand ; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. 4. And Ezra the scribe stood upon a

1. *the street, i.e.* the square between the south-east corner of the Temple precincts and the eastern wall : the same as that mentioned above, Ezra x. 9. Ezra now comes forward again from his retirement. The " Law " which he reads is the Pentateuch, which he had helped to compile and edit.

pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose ; 5. and Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people ; (for he was above all the people ;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up : 6. and Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands : and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

The Law is interpreted to the people.—7. Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law : and the people stood in their place. 8. So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

9. And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the LORD your God ; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. 10. Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared : for this day is holy unto our Lord : neither be ye sorry ; for the joy of the LORD is your strength. 11. So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for

8. This probably means that the Hebrew was interpreted to the people in Aramaic, which as we have seen was becoming more and more the vernacular. But possibly it may only signify that the injunctions of the Law were expounded in simple language.

9. *Tirshatha*, the Persian (non-Semitic) equivalent of "governor"—*i.e.* the local governor, as opposed to the superior satrap of the province. See above on Ezra v. 3, etc.

10. *eat the fat, etc.* A proverb, meaning "This is a festival, not a day of mourning."

the day is holy ; neither be ye grieved. 12. And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

Celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles.—13. And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law. 14. And they found written in the law which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month : 15. and that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written.

16. So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim. 17. And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths : for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness. 18. Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day,

14. For the Feast of Tabernacles see above (p. 133) and notes. We are to infer that the feast had not been celebrated since the occasion recorded (*loc. cit.*), in the time of Zerubbabel, more than a century before this.

16. **gate of Ephraim**, in the northern wall facing towards the Ephraimite territory.

17. *Merely* means that so *elaborate and complete* a celebration of the feast had not been known since Joshua's day.

he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days ; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner.

Confession of the nation's sins, committed from the time of Abraham onwards.—ix. 1. Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them. 2. And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. 3. And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God one fourth part of the day ; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the LORD their God.

4. Then stood up upon the stairs, of the Levites, Jeshua, and Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani, and cried with a loud voice unto the LORD their God. 5. Then the Levites, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, Stand up and bless the LORD your God for ever and ever : and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. 6. Thou, even thou, art LORD alone ; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all ; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee. 7. Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham ; 8. and foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed,

and hast performed thy words ; for thou art righteous : 9. and didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the Red sea ; 10. and shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land : for thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them. So didst thou get thee a name, as it is this day. 11. And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land ; and their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters. 12. Moreover thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar ; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go. 13. Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments : 14. and madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant : 15. and gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them. 16. But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments, 17. and refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them ; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage : but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not. 18. Yea,

17. Numbers xiv. 4 : " And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt."

when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations ; 19. yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness : the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way ; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go. 20. Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. 21. Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing ; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not. 22. Moreover thou gavest them kingdoms and nations, and didst divide them into corners : so they possessed the land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Hesbon, and the land of Og king of Bashan. 23. Their children also multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven, and broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess it. 24. So the children went in and possessed the land, and thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that they might do with them as they would. 25. And they took strong cities, and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vineyards, and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance : so they did eat, and were filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness. 26. Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and

they wrought great provocations. 27. Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them : and in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven ; and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies. 28. But after they had rest, they did evil again before thee ; therefore leftest thou them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them : yet when they returned, and cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven ; and many times didst thou deliver them according to thy mercies : 29. and testifiedst against them, that thou mightest bring them again unto thy law : yet they dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgments, (which if a man do, he shall live in them ;) and withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear. 30. Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets : yet would they not give ear : therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands. 31. Nevertheless for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them ; for thou art a gracious and merciful God.

32. Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before thee, that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day. 33. Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us ;

29. Which judgments, if a man perform them, will bring him prosperity. Cf. St. Luke x. 28: " This do, and thou shalt live."

for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly : 34. neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers, kept thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments and thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against them. 35. For they have not served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness that thou gavest them, and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works. 36. Behold, we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it : 37. and it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins : also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress.

THE PEOPLE THEREUPON SWEAR TO OBEY THE COVENANT,
WITH ITS VARIOUS OBLIGATIONS

Parts of Nehemiah ix.-xiii

The leaders set their seal to the covenant.—ix. 38. And because of all this we make a sure covenant and write it ; and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it.

The people swear to obey it.—x. 28. And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinims, and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge, and having understanding ; 29. they clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a

ix. 38, x. 28. The leaders seal or sign the treaty : the rest of the population subscribe to its terms without specifically sealing it.

curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes ;

And to keep the laws concerning marriage, Sabbatical year, etc.—30. And that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons : 31. and if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day : and that we would leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt. 32. Also we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God ; 33. for the shewbread, and for the continual meat offering, and for the continual burnt offering, of the sabbaths, of the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy things, and for the sin offerings to make an atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God. 34. And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the law : 35. and to bring the firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house

31. leave the seventh year, *i.e.* let the land rest fallow, an observance which the Priestly Code of Law (contained in Leviticus) enjoins in each seventh or Sabbatic year. *See* Lev. xxv. 2-7. There are indications that the order was not quite strictly observed (*e.g.* 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21) ; but still it was maintained until late times and is referred to in the Apocrypha, in Josephus, and in the Histories of Tacitus (v. 4) : “ Dein blandiente inertia septimum quoque annum ignaviæ datum ” ! The exaction of debts was also “ suspended ” in this year, according to the Deuteronomic Law (Deut. xv.). *See* Ryle, *ad loc.*

of the LORD : 36. also the firstborn of our sons, and of our cattle, as it is written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God : 37. and that we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God ; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage. 38. And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes : and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house. 39. For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine, and the oil, unto the chambers, where are the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers : and we will not forsake the house of our God.

Organisation of the revenue of the Jewish church.—xii. 44. And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions of the law for the priests and Levites : for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited. 47. And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel, and

37. **tithes** = tenth part. Much of the income of the rectors of parishes in England to-day is derived from tithes upon the produce of the soil which were devoted to this religious purpose centuries ago. Nowadays, however, the tithes are not given in kind, but a money payment is made according to a definite standard each year.

44. **portions of the law**, *i.e.* portions appointed by the law.
waited, *i.e.* ministered—"Waited on the Lord."

in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers and the porters, every day his portion : and they sanctified holy things unto the Levites ; and the Levites sanctified them unto the children of Aaron.

Exclusion of aliens.—xiii. 1. On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people ; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever ; 2. because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them : howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing. 3. Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.

NEHEMIAH'S SECOND VISIT, AND INSISTENCE UPON THE OBSERVANCE OF THE COVENANT

Nehemiah xiii. 4 to end

Events during his absence in Persia.—4. And before this, Eliashib the priest, having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, was allied unto Tobiah : 5. and he had prepared for him a great chamber, where aforetime

3. Between this verse and the incidents recorded in the next verse an interval of twelve years elapses, at the end of which Nehemiah returned to Persia for a short time. See Introduction to this section (p. 166). It is evident that some part of Nehemiah's memoirs has been excised by the compiler, and the remaining portion is not very skilfully adjusted by him to the antecedent sentences.

4. Contrary to the Law, Eliashib had contracted an alliance, by marriage, with Tobiah. His grandson also had married Sanballat's daughter. Tobiah, as we have previously heard (*supra*, chap. vi. 18), was allied to other noble houses in Judah in contravention of the legal ordinances.

And before this (*cf.* But in all this time *infra*, v. 6) alludes to events recorded in those parts of the memoirs which the compiler has suppressed.

they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests. 6. But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem: for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon came I unto the king.

His return, after a very short absence from Jerusalem.— And after certain days obtained I leave of the king: 7. and I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. 8. And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber. 9. Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense.

10. And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field. 11. Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. 12. Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries. 13. And I made treasurers over the treasuries, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah: and next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah: for they were counted faithful, and their office was to distribute unto their brethren. 14. Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof.

He checks the desecration of the Sabbath.—15. In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses ; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day : and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. 16. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. 17. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day ? 18. Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city ? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. 19. And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath : and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day. 20. So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. 21. Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall ? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath. 22. And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.

Recurrence of the marriage difficulty.—23. In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of

Ammon, and of Moab : 24. and their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. 25. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. 26. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. 27. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives? 28. And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son in law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from me. 29. Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites. 30. Thus cleansed I them from all strangers, and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business; 31. and for the wood offering, at times appointed, and for the firstfruits. Remember me, O my God, for good.

24. the speech of Ashdod, another dialect of Semitic.

28. It is probable that this unnamed grandson of Eliashib is to be identified with Manasseh, who went off and founded the famous rival temple of the Samaritans on Mt. Gerizim, to which the woman of Samaria alludes in her conversation with our Lord. Though Josephus puts Manasseh in the time of Alexander the Great, a century after Nehemiah, his dates are proved to be quite untrustworthy. The Samaritan Temple was destroyed by John Hyrcanus, one of the Maccabees (end of 2nd cent. B.C.).

30. wards = duties.

THE PROPHET MALACHI

433 B.C.

Of the personality of this prophet nothing more is known than can be gathered from the text of his prophecy. The name Malachi means "My Messenger." Some scholars, therefore, have thought that Malachi should not be translated as a proper name but as "my messenger," and that the real name of the prophet is unknown. We may suggest, however, that it is equally possible that Malachi is the prophet's name and that he is purposely playing upon it in his preaching, in the same way as many of the ancients play upon names and words for special effect—*e.g.* Micah i. 10-16, a passage which contains a complete series of such paronomasiæ.

On the other hand the prophet can be dated with confidence at the period during Nehemiah's absence from Jerusalem at the end of 433 B.C.

He inveighs against those evils which, as we have already seen, roused the stern indignation of Nehemiah himself on his return. His castigations are poured upon (i) the Priests, who were the leaders of the proletariat, and ought particularly to have known better and behaved better, (ii) the people in general, who were disregarding the law, to which they had recently sworn obedience, especially in entering upon foreign marriages and lightly divorcing their Hebrew wives. In no obscure phraseology, the preacher warns them of the coming of Jehovah in their midst as both Judge and Redeemer. In style this prophet differs from all his predecessors. He forgoes the "tremendous poetic energy" of an Isaiah and the plain prose

of a Haggai, and adopts the debating or dialectic method instead : he argues with his congregation.

(I) THE PRIESTS

(a) *Their actual Shortcomings*

Malachi i. 6-13

6. A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master : if then I be a father, where is mine honour ? and if I be a master, where is my fear ? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name ? 7. Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar ; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee ? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible. 8. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil ? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil ? offer it now unto thy governor ; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person ? saith the LORD of hosts. 9. And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us : this hath been by your means : will he regard your persons ? saith the LORD of hosts. 10. *Oh, that there were one among you that would shut the doors, that ye might not kindle fire on mine altar in vain !* I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. 11. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles ; and in every

8. The priests offer maimed animals to Jehovah in sacrifice. Would even the governor of the city accept such offerings ? No ! How much less, then, will God accept them !

10, 11. The words in italics are from the R.V. " It would be better for some bold spirit frankly to shut up the Temple and stop the services, than to go on with these debased performances ; especially as even the Gentiles are worshipping God with greater sincerity and putting the chosen race to shame in this respect."

place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering : for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

12. But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted ; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. 13. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it ! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts ; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick ; thus ye brought an offering : should I accept this of your hand ? saith the LORD.

(b) What ideally they should be

Malachi ii. 4-8

4. And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. 5. My covenant was with him of life and peace ; and I gave them to him, for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. 6. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips : he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. 7. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth : for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. 8. But ye are departed out of the way ; ye have caused many to stumble at the law ; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.

(2) THE PEOPLE AND THE PRIESTS

(a) The Messiah shall come as a Judge to the Wicked,

Malachi iii. 1-5, and iv. 1

1. Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me : and the Lord, whom ye seek,

shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in : behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. 2. But who may abide the day of his coming ? and who shall stand when he appeareth ? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap : 3. and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver : and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. 4. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years. 5. And I will come near to you to judgment ; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

iv. 1. For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven ; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble : and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

(b) And as a Sun to the Good

Malachi iv. 2, 3

2. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings ; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. 3. And ye shall tread down the wicked ; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts,

THE BOOK OF ESTHER

Though the scene of the story is laid at Susa in the time of Xerxes (485-465 B.C.), this book was probably not written until shortly after the overthrow of the Persian Empire by Alexander of Macedon at the battle of Arbela in 331 B.C. Like the book of Daniel it is rather a "religious romance" than a historical document : it is one of those haggâdhoth or traditional stories, to which reference has been made (p. 70). It may rest upon a basis of fact, which has been artistically worked up for the purpose of enforcing a religious lesson. In the language of critics it would be called an ætiological story, written to explain the origin of the feast of Purim, or Lots. "The book illustrates the capacity of the Jews for making their influence felt amid heathen surroundings ; it also reflects the fierce nationalistic temper which prevailed among them at the time when the book was written. The name of God is not mentioned in the book, but it is nevertheless the product of an unshaken faith in the providence of God, overruling the destinies of His people, and raising up fitting instruments for their deliverance."¹

It must be remembered that, though Jerusalem had now (483 B.C.) been restored and many of the exiles had returned to their own land, yet large numbers were still dispersed in Persia, Syria, Mesopotamia, and elsewhere. Hence Esther was still a resident in the Persian capital, when she was raised to be the consort of Xerxes, who had succeeded his father Darius Hystaspes on the throne in 485 B.C.

\ ¹ Ottley, p. 245.

VASHTI'S REFUSAL

Esther i. 1-22

1. Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces :) 2. that in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace, 3. in the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants ; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him : 4. when he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, even an hundred and fourscore days. 5. And when these days were expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto great and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace ; 6. where were white, green, and blue, hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble ; the beds were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black, marble. 7. And they gave them drink in vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king. 8. And the drinking was according to the law ; none did compel : for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure. 9. Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus.

1. Ahasuerus = Xerxes.

2. Shushan = Susa, the capital of Persia, situated about 250 miles east of Babylon. It was used as the winter residence of the Persian kings.

The queen, very properly, refuses to parade her beauty before the banqueters.—10. On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, 11. to bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to shew the people and the princes her beauty; for she was fair to look on. 12. But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him.

13. Then the king said to the wise men, which knew the times, (for so was the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment: 14. and the next unto him was Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, and which sat the first in the kingdom :) 15. What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath not performed the commandment of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains? 16. And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that are in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus. 17. For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not. 18. Likewise shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus shall there arise too much contempt and

wrath. 19. If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus ; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she. 20. And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give their husbands honour, both to great and small. 21. And the saying pleased the king, and the princes ; and the king did according to the word of Memucan : 22. for he sent letters into all the king's provinces according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and that it should be published according to the language of every people.

ESTHER IS MADE QUEEN

Esther ii. 1-11, 15-23

1. After these things when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased he remembered Vashti and what she had done, and what was decreed against her. 2. Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king : 3. and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hege the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women ; and let their things for purification be given them : 4. and let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king ; and he did so.

3. purification : oil, myrrh, and unguents were given to the maidens to enhance their personal beauty.

Esther, an orphan, is brought before the king.—5. Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite ; 6. who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away. 7. And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter : for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful ; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.

8. So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women. 9. And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him ; and he speedily gave her her things for purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, which were meet to be given her, out of the king's house : and he preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women. 10. Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred : for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew it. 11. And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.

She conceals from him her Jewish parentage, and is made queen.—15. Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required

nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her. 16. So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. 17. And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins ; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti. 18. Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast ; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king. 19. And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate. 20. Esther had not yet shewed her kindred nor her people ; as Mordecai had charged her : for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him.

Mordecai, discovering a plot, saves the king from assassination.—21. In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. 22. And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen ; and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name. 23. And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out ; therefore they were both hanged on a tree ; and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king.

18. In celebration of the royal marriage the monarch granted a remission of taxation to the provinces, and distributed doles as became so magnificent a potentate.

19. *i.e.* Mordecai attended at court.

HAMAN'S PLOT

Esther iii. 1-15

1. After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.

2. And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman : for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence. 3. Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment ? 4. Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand : for he had told them that he was a Jew. 5. And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath. 6. And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone ; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai : wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.

7. In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar.

1. Agagite : the meaning of this is entirely unknown. It has no connexion with Agag of Amalek, as some ancients and a few moderns imagined.

4. matters lit. " words " = position, *τὰ τοῦ* M.

7. Nisan = April. Adar = March. twelfth year, *i.e.* 474 B.C.

Haman superstitiously trusts to the lot, which he casts every day consecutively for a whole year, in order to secure a lucky month for his venture.

Haman secures a royal order for the destruction of the Jews.—8. And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people ; neither keep they the king's laws ; therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. 9. If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed : and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries. 10. And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy. 11. And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also to do with them as it seemeth good to thee. 12. Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province, according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language ; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring. 13. And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the

9. Haman offers a large bribe of 3 million pounds to the king, to induce him to allow the massacre of the Jews. If the reading in v. 11 is correct, the king gives his permission, without consenting to accept the bribe. The Septuagint also favours this interpretation (τὸ μὲν ἀργύριον ἔχε, τῷ δὲ ἔθνει χρῶ ὡς βούλει). But most commentators interpret Xerxes to have taken the bribe. And indeed it is hard to understand his conduct towards the Jews, unless he were thus moved by avarice.

13. An excellent system of posts or ἀγγαρήια had been established in the Persian Empire by Cyrus.

twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey. 14. The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day. 15. The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed.

ESTHER'S RESOLVE

Esther iv. 1-7

1. When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry; 2. and came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. 3. And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

4. So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told it her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him; but he received it not. 5. Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and gave him a commandment to Mordecai, to know what it was, and why it was. 6. So Hatach went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city, which was before the king's gate. 7. And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and of the sum of the money that Haman had promised

to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them. 8. Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to shew it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people. 9. And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

Mordecai presses Esther to plead for the Jews to the King. —10. Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai ; 11. All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live : but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days. 12. And they told to Mordecai Esther's words. 13. Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. 14. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place ; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed : and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this ?

15. Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, 16. Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink

14. and who knoweth, etc., means, " And is it not likely that God has made you queen just for this end—to save your people from this calamity ? "

three days, night or day : I also and my maidens will fast likewise ; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law : and if I perish, I perish. 17. So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

ESTHER'S SUCCESS

Esther v. 1-14

1. Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house : and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house. 2. And it was so, when the king saw Esther, the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight ; and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre. 3. Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther ? and what is thy request ? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom. 4. And Esther answered, If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him. 5. Then the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

6. And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition ? and it shall be granted thee : and

1. The language is vague. Apparently the king's throne was placed at the entrance to the private apartments, from the inner courtyard, and facing the inner courtyard in which he espied Esther standing.

what is thy request ? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed. 7. Then answered Esther, and said, My petition and my request is ; 8. if I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to morrow as the king hath said.

Haman : his pride before his fall.—9. Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart : but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai. 10. Nevertheless Haman refrained himself : and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife. 11. And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. 12. Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself ; and to morrow am I invited unto her also with the king. 13. Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.

14. Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon : then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman ; and he caused the gallows to be made.

8. as the king hath said, *i.e.* to-morrow I will make known my request to the king, which he has promised to perform.

HAMAN'S DISCOMFITURE

Esther vi. 1-14

1. On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles ; and they were read before the king. 2. And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. 3. And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this ? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him.

Haman is compelled to honour the enemy he scorned.—

4. And the king said, Who is in the court ? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him. 5. And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in. 6. So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour ? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself ? 7. And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour, 8. let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head : 9. and let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king

delighteth to honour. 10. Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate : let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken. 11. Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

12. And Mordecai came again to the king's gate. But Haman hasted to his house mourning, and having his head covered. 13. And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends every thing that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him. 14. And while they were yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains and hasted to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.

HAMAN'S EXECUTION

Esther vii. 1-10

1. So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen. 2. And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, queen Esther ? and it shall be granted thee : and what is thy request ? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom. 3. Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and

my people at my request : 4. for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage.

5. Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so ? 6. And Esther said, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen.

7. And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath went into the palace garden : and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen ; for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king. 8. Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine ; and Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther was. Then they covered Haman's face. 9. And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon. 10. So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

4. *although, etc.* The meaning is not clear, and the LXX version gives quite a mistaken paraphrase. It seems to mean either (a) Although in that case Haman, our adversary, would not have been forced to give compensation for the harm which he induced the king to bring on us : or (b) thus, as R.V. marg. : "For our affliction is not to be compared with the king's damage," *i.e.* "Our troubles as an enslaved people are not to be compared with the possible harm our continued freedom might presumably have done to the empire : " therefore I would have said nothing, and allowed my people to suffer in silence.

8. Haman, in despair, prostrates himself upon Esther's couch.

A NEW ROYAL DECREE IN FAVOUR OF THE JEWS

Esther viii. 1-17

1. On that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman the Jews' enemy unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king ; for Esther had told what he was unto her. 2. And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

3. And Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews. 4. Then the king held out the golden sceptre toward Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the king, 5. and said, If it please the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews which are in all the king's provinces : 6. for how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people, or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred ?

A new decree permits the Jews to resist any attacks upon them.

—7. Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews. 8. Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring : for the writing which is

8. Custom forbade the king's previous decree against the Jews to be countermanded. He therefore issues a new decree legalising any forcible methods the Jews might take to protect themselves against the execution of the former adverse decree.

written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse. 9. Then were the king's scribes called at that time in the third month, that is, the month Sivan, on the three and twentieth day thereof ; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded unto the Jews, and to the lieutenants, and the deputies and rulers of the provinces which are from India unto Ethiopia, an hundred twenty and seven provinces, unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language, and to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language. 10. And he wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name, and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries : 11. wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey, 12. upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar.

The edict is posted to every province of the empire.—

13. The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies. 14. So the posts that rode upon mules and camels went out, being hastened and pressed on

9. **Sivan** = June. Haman's decree was not to have come into effect until the following March. The Jews would therefore have nine months in which to make preparation and to secure the proclamation of the king's second edict in every corner of the empire.

by the king's commandment. And the decree was given at Shushan the palace.

15. And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.

16. The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour.

17. And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.

VENGEANCE OF THE JEWS AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FEAST OF PURIM

Esther ix. 1-6, 10-28

1. Now in the twelfth month, that is the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, (though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them;)

2. the Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them fell upon all people.

3. And all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants and the deputies, and officers of the king, helped the Jews; because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them.

4. For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame went out throughout all the provinces: for this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater. 5. Thus the Jews smote all their

enemies with the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction, and did what they would unto those that hated them. 6. And in Shushan the palace the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men. 10. The ten sons of Haman, the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, slew they ; but on the spoil laid they not their hand. 11. On that day the number of those that were slain in Shushan the palace was brought before the king.

12. And the king said unto Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of Haman ; what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces ? now what is thy petition ? and it shall be granted thee : or what is thy request further ? and it shall be done. 13. Then said Esther, If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan to do to morrow also according unto this day's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows. 14. And the king commanded it so to be done : and the decree was given at Shushan ; and they hanged Haman's ten sons. 15. For the Jews that were in Shushan gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar, and slew three hundred men at Shushan ; but on the prey they laid not their hand. 16. But the other Jews that were in the king's provinces gathered themselves together, and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of their foes seventy and five thousand, but they laid not their hands on the prey, 17. on the thirteenth day of the month Adar ; and on the fourteenth day of the same rested they, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

17. The ritual by which these events were commemorated in after days was as follows. On Adar (March) 13th the Book of Esther was publicly read in the synagogues amid the execrations of the congregation ; on the 14th and 15th the feast of Purim took place.

18. But the Jews that were at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day thereof, and on the fourteenth thereof ; and on the fifteenth day of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. 19. Therefore the Jews of the villages, that dwelt in the unwalled towns, made the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting, and a good day, and of sending portions one to another.

The Feast of Purim is established to commemorate the escape of the Jews.—20. And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, both nigh and far, 21. to stablish this among them, that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same yearly, 22. as the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day ; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor. 23. And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them ; 24. because Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is, the lot, to consume them, and to destroy them ; 25. but when Esther came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he had devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. 26. Wherefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur. Therefore for all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and which had come unto them, 27. the Jews ordained, and took

upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their appointed time every year ; 28. and that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city ; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed.

THE PROPHETS OBADIAH, JOEL, JONAH, AND DANIEL

A very brief sketch of the work of the Prophets is here given in order that the reader may complete his conspectus of the latter part of the Old Testament Canon (except for the Sapiential or “ Wisdom ” books), and may bring all the teachers of the pre-Christian era into line with the historical times and events with which they are connected. It is admitted that the date of none of these four writers except Daniel can be assigned with certainty, but the view here adopted is that of the best-qualified scholars of the present day.

In the prophecies of Obadiah and Joel, whose preaching dates from about 350 B.C., the most prominent feature to be observed is their attitude towards the heathen nations.

28. In the Apocrypha are contained several passages from the Greek version of Esther which are not found in the Hebrew or Aramaic versions, and therefore have not been inserted in the Canon, nor, consequently, in the English Old Testament. These passages did not form part of the original Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures (the Septuagint), but are interpolations of a later date and by different hands.

Unlike Zechariah and other famous predecessors, unlike Jonah their contemporary, and the author of Daniel their successor, these two prophets accentuate the exclusiveness of Israel's claim to the privilege of Jehovah's blessings. In their eyes God will judge the nations and punish them for their contumelious conduct towards the chosen race : they shall be crushed, Israel shall be exalted, and in Zion, in Jerusalem, salvation shall be found, if only Israel will repent and observe the divine commandments. To **Jonah**, on the other hand, as to others before him, the truth was brought home, even against his will, that God would indeed judge the nations, but that the judgment would be the means of including them ultimately in the divine scheme of Redemption for all the world, for whom the Christ was to die. His voice is raised as a protest against the too particularist notions of Jewish privilege which were current in his time. The author of **Daniel**, indeed, goes further afield still, and writing about 165 B.C., just after the furious oppression of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes,¹ King of Syria, he takes a comprehensive and philosophical view of all history as it was known to him. What is the meaning of it all ? Whither does it tend ? He sees that the end which the Father has in view is not nationalistic but universal. God controls the destinies of all the people of the earth and the relations which the elect race bears towards each of them. Through Israel, indeed, salvation will come ; but the end, the ultimate kingdom of God, which shall supersede all the other kingdoms of the earth, will be a

¹ It was this prince who set up in the Temple the "abomination that maketh desolate" ; that is, he introduced images of heathen gods into the Temple and set that of Zeus on the altar itself (Dan. xi. 31, xii. 11 ; St. Matt. xxiv. 15).

kingdom of all the *saints*, all the righteous men, who will lead that sort of heavenly life which we find the devouter Jews anticipating in our Lord's time.

Such are the main general features of these prophets. One particular note predominating in each of the three prophets Obadiah, Joel, and Daniel must also be touched upon.

Obadiah's theme is the pronunciation of impending vengeance upon Edom for her malignity against Jerusalem in the day of her capture (*cf.* above, p. 105 and notes). This prophecy was abundantly fulfilled. By the end of the fourth century B.C. foreigners had captured Petra: in the second century the Maccabean princes dispeopled some of the Edomite territories and cities: and in B.C. 66 Simon of Gerasa overran the country with fire and sword.

In Joel a special promise is made of the gift of the Spirit of God to the faithful Israelites. Hence he has been called the "Old Testament prophet of the Holy Ghost."

Daniel, in his visions, sees "one like unto a son of man," established as Lord of a glorious and everlasting kingdom by the "Ancient of Days." This expression, "a son of man," though used by Daniel to personify only the universal body of the saints, was caught up in later days¹ and used as a title for the Messiah. Our Lord Himself adopts the name, which had now been individualised into "*The Son of Man*," as fitly denoting His position. By it He means to mark both this ideal representation in His own person of all humanity, its lowliness as well as its greatness, and also

¹ *Vide* The book of Enoch, an invaluable work which had great influence on early Christian writers, and which seems to have been excluded from the Hebrew Canon almost by accident. See Stanley, iii., 328 *seq.*

His kingship over Israel, such as was connected with the name both by the prophet himself and by the succeeding generations of Israelites.

THE PUNISHMENT OF EDM,

Obadiah 1-2, 10-15, 17

1. The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord God concerning Edom ; We have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle. 2. Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen : thou art greatly despised.

10. For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. 11. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. 12. But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger ; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction ; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress. 13. Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity ; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity ; 14. neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape ; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress.

AND OF ALL THE HEATHEN ;

15. For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen : as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee : thy reward shall return upon thine own head.

AND THE SALVATION OF ISRAEL

17. But upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness ; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.

THE REPENTANCE OF ISRAEL

Joel ii. 12-13, 17, 28-32

12. Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning : 13. and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God : for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. 17. Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them : wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God ?

SHALL BE FOLLOWED BY THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT

28. And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh ; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions : 29. and also upon the

servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. 30. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

31. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. 32. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered.

AND THE SALVATION OF ISRAEL

For in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

NOTES

GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

NOTE I

THE GEOGRAPHY OF PALESTINE

It is advisable, when we read the history recorded in the books of the Old Testament, that we should constantly bear in mind certain points about the geography of the Holy Land.

1. POSITION.—It is at the extreme east of the Mediterranean, and forms a link between east and west, lying as it does on the main land-route between Egypt, Assyria, and Asia Minor. So, in the history of the world, Hebrew¹ and Jewish ideas have proved a connecting link between east and west, between the Semite and the Aryan.

2. SIZE.—The country was tiny, the distance from “ Dan to Beersheba,” the phrase which was used to sum up the whole of Israel, being roughly 150 miles. The population was proportionately small ; and the Hebrews themselves at no time occupied anything like the whole of it. In the reign of Hezekiah, after the fall of Samaria, “ Judah ” means the comparatively few towns on the highlands round Jerusalem.

¹ The word “ Hebrew ” is used of the people of Israel throughout all their history. “ Jew,” properly applicable only to the Southern Kingdom after the fall of Samaria, came to have a wider significance, until finally it denoted the whole race, as opposed to “ the Gentiles,” or heathen nations.

3. FEATURES.—The country of Palestine is as peculiar and distinctive in character as the people who occupied it. Passing eastward from the sea-coast we may mention the following divisions into which it naturally falls:

(a) The Maritime Plain, containing (in order from south to north) Philistia, the Plain of Sharon, and Phœnicia. The Plain is broken by the range of Carmel, which juts out into the sea, and stretches inland in a south-easterly direction.

(b) The Shephelah, or lowlands, sloping up to the highlands, and intersected by many streams and their valleys, the chief of which is the Plain of Dothan.

(c) The hill-country of Judah and Ephraim, to which the Hebrew population was in the main confined.

(d) The great rift, called the Arabah, leading from Dan and the Waters of Merom, containing the Sea of Galilee, the River Jordan, and the Dead Sea, and issuing at last in the Gulf of Akabah, the N.E. branch of the Red Sea. Much of this is considerably below sea-level; the Dead Sea, which is very salt, is 1,292 ft. below the Mediterranean.

(e) East of the Jordan the land rises again very quickly, and only a very narrow strip intervenes before the desert is reached.

NOTE II

THE FORMATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON

1. Canon primarily means the “standard” to which a book, or portion of a book, must attain in respect of its historical, moral, and religious value, in order to be ranked among the authoritative sacred Scriptures. Hence the

term, from being used of the standard by which a book was judged, has come to be applied to the body of books themselves, which have satisfied the requirements of this standard. Thus the "Old Testament Canon" means those sacred books of Hebrew literature which were judged by the Hebrews to satisfy these requirements, just as the "New Testament Canon" means that body of sacred books which were judged by the early Christian Church to satisfy the requirements of the Christian standard. These two bodies of sacred literature, the one translated from the original Hebrew and Aramaic, the other translated from the original Greek, together form our Bible.

Besides those books which are included in the Old Testament and the New Testament, there existed many, and exist some, which though valuable in their religious and moral teaching, were yet not considered sufficiently valuable to be admitted respectively into the Old Testament and New Testament Canons. Such books are called Apocryphal; that is, obscure, unrecognised, or spurious. Some of these are comprised in the "Apocrypha," which is often bound up with our modern Bibles, being placed after the end of the Old Testament. Parts of this are read in the English Church services, since they afford a good "example of life and instruction of manners."

There is, derived from the other two, yet a third meaning of the term "Canon." Since the sacred writings which are admitted into the Bible conform to a given standard, so in their turn they form the standard by which religious doctrines are judged. A doctrine, or belief, is canonical if it can be justified by the authority of the canonical books of the Bible; it is uncanonical, though not necessarily wrong, if it cannot thus be proved.

2. How and when was it decided which of the books of Hebrew sacred literature were worthy to be accounted canonical, and which should be relegated to the lower sphere of uncanonical works? In other words, when did the Hebrews decide what was, and what was not, part of *their* "Bible"? The answer is this. The Canon was not suddenly fixed by any one body of men, by any council, nor at any one time. It was the gradual result of criticism, appreciation, use, and experience. If any part of their sacred writings was felt by the Jews to be valuable and useful and helpful and true, and was therefore continuously used by them as a source of their knowledge of God, and recognised as being part of His message by which He gradually, and more and more clearly as time went on, revealed Himself to them and showed them what He would have them be, and what His purpose was towards them, then this part would be accepted by them as authoritative or canonical. Thus *part* of the Canon would have become fixed. Later on another part would, by a similar critical process, be added to their Canon; and eventually, by about the time of our Lord, the entire Canon of the Old Testament as we have it, would have been completed. We can, as a matter of fact, trace, though not with perfect clearness, this process. In quite early days the Decalogue was accepted in this way. It had been delivered to the Israelites by Moses, of whose personality not even the most pronounced critics of the Bible have ever had any doubt. To this were added in course of time the other different and more highly developed injunctions of the Hebrew law; until, after the specific promulgation of the Deuteronomic law by King Josiah in 621 B.C., and the careful collection of all their legislative documents by the scholars of the

Exile, the first great part of the Canon, the Law (Torah), which we call the Pentateuch, was completed (445 B.C.).

By degrees, and by the same tests—the value, truth, and inspiration of the books—there was added to the Canon its second great volume, the Prophets (Nebhiim), as the Jews called it. This volume consisted of the following books : Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets, from Hosea to Malachi. This part of the Canon was defined before the end of the third century B.C.

The third volume of the Canon, which was called the Sacred Writings (Kethubhim, or in Greek, Hagiographa), embraced the Psalms, the Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Ruth, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, the prophet Daniel, and the Sapiential Literature, *i.e.* Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes. It was probably accepted into the Canon by about the Christian era, though the date is not certain. Daniel, which was the last book of the Old Testament to be composed (165 B.C.), is quoted by our Lord, who refers by name, too, to the other two volumes, the Law and the Prophets ; but some books in this last volume are not mentioned by our Lord nor the apostles, and it is therefore argued by some that this volume was not entirely complete in their day. But this negative argument from silence is not conclusive evidence ; and it is certain that the Jewish Bible in our Lord's time was practically, if not completely, identical with the Old Testament Canon as we have it. Thus the Old Testament Canon rests upon the highest possible authority, no less than that of Christ Himself.¹

¹ See G. Adam Smith, *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, Lecture I.

3. A word remains to be said upon the earliest version of the Hebrew Bible in a foreign language—that called the Septuagint, in Greek. This translation was rendered necessary owing to the spread of the Greek tongue as a familiar vehicle of speech, side by side with the vernacular Aramaic, throughout Syria and Palestine in the third and second centuries before Christ. Tradition has it that the work of translation was *begun* in the third century B.C., at Alexandria, under the auspices of Ptolemy Philadelphus, King of Egypt from 285 to 247 B.C. Of this we cannot be certain. But it is known with certainty that the work was only achieved slowly. The “Law” was the first part to be translated, and then the work was continued at different times and by different hands. Some portions of the version are far inferior to others, both in accuracy and style. At some date before the end of the pre-Christian era the translation of the whole Canon was eventually completed; and the result was, and is, most valuable as an assistance to the correction and interpretation of the Hebrew text as it has come down to us.

NOTE III

THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

A skeleton outline is here given, showing just the leading events in this period, in order to enable the younger reader to bridge over the gap between the time of Nehemiah and the birth of Christ, which often is a mere blank to him. It is a period full of interest and variety of detail, for a brief

sketch of which the reader is referred to such works as Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. iii., and Ottley's *History of the Hebrews*, chaps. xi. and xii.¹

I

FROM NEHEMIAH TO THE END OF THE PERSIAN
SUZERAINTY OVER JUDÆA

(432-331 B.C.)

Nehemiah at Jerusalem. Artaxerxes is King
of the Persian Empire.

B.C.
432.

Judæa is subject to the satrap of Western Syria, but its administration is in all internal matters controlled by the High Priest, whose office is hereditary. He is assisted by a council of elders and priests, which was afterwards known as the Sanhedrin. The Law which is enforced is not that of Persia, but that of the Pentateuch. Internal freedom is allowed to the Jews. As the High Priesthood developed more and more into a local Principate, the office became the object of ambition to the leaders of the priestly families, and occasionally there occur unseemly incidents, when rival claimants contend for the position. The scribes, as interpreters of the Law, become increasingly powerful.

432-331.

¹ A useful and easily accessible outline of the period will be found also in the introduction to Hillard's *Life of Christ*.

II

THE PERIOD OF GREEK SUPREMACY

(331-167 B.C.)

B.C.
331.

Alexander of Macedon overthrew Darius the Persian king at the Battles of Issus (333) and Arbela (331). The Persian Empire thus became part of the Macedonian Empire, of which Judæa constituted a small province. Internally the administration of Judæa remained as before. In Egypt Alexander founded Alexandria, the population of which contained a large contingent of Jews, who thus came into close contact with other nationalities. From this time Greek ideas and the Greek language began to permeate Jewish society, but not to such an extent as to denationalise the Jews, whose Church and religion presented a bulwark against external influences.

323.
301-203.

Alexander died. His empire was split up into several kingdoms, ruled over by his generals, who are known to history as the Diadochi, or successors. Syria was one of these kingdoms, Egypt another, and Judæa formed a buffer state between the two, being subject first to Egypt (roughly from 301 to 203), and then to Syria. The period of subjection to Egypt was "perhaps the happiest enjoyed by Judæa since the loss of her independence." At the same time, Judæa, and the capital itself, were at

Overlord-
ship of the
Ptolemies.

times invaded and plundered by the military forces of these two Greek kingdoms to the north and south of them—kingdoms which were continually at variance with each other.

B.C.
301-203.

In the third century, about 250 B.C. probably, the Greek version of the Hebrew Bible (the Septuagint), was begun at Alexandria. This shows that, outside Judæa, the Greek language had so far become the vernacular of the dispersed Hebrews as to necessitate a translation of their ancient Scriptures for their use.

Syria wrested the mastery of Judæa from Egypt at the beginning of 203, to the sorrow of the majority, but the delight of a party of the inhabitants, which had for some time espoused the Syrian cause. From this time forward until the end of the Syrian domination the High Priesthood ceased to be hereditary, and was “sold by the Syrian monarch to the highest bidder.” This was a troublous period, in the course of which neither the city nor the Temple escaped the plunderer’s hand. But in 168 B.C. Syrian oppression passed beyond the limits of endurance, and roused a patriotic party in antagonism to it, which eventually threw off the Syrian trammels altogether. Antiochus Epiphanes endeavoured to crush out the Jewish religion by force. The Temple was desecrated by the “abomination that maketh desolate”—*i.e.* by a statue of Zeus placed on the Altar, and all copies of the

203-167.

Overlord-
ship of the
Seleucidæ.

B.C.
167.

Law were ordered to be destroyed. A family called the Maccabees, or Hasmoneans, boldly resisted (167). Judas, their leader, raised a band in the country, and by 165 B.C. he was able so far to set the Syrian arms at defiance as to enter the city and rededicate the Temple.

III

THE MACCABEAN RULE (165-37 B.C.)

165-142

From 165 onwards Judas Maccabæus and his family were masters of Judæa. On his death in 160 his brother Jonathan continued to keep the nationalistic banner unfurled, and by 142 B.C. Syrian rule in Judæa was at an end, though nominally the country was still

142-70

subject to Syrian superiority. Henceforth the head of the Maccabean house was prince of the people, and also high priest. The foreign power which now begins to loom in the distance is Rome ; but until about 70 B.C. the contact with Rome was not close. Within the city party spirit grew now more active in religious matters than in political, and the rise of the Pharisees and Sadducees may be dated from the early years of the Maccabean rule. Some of the prince-priests were distinguished for their military prowess, like the bishops of the Middle Ages ; John Hyrcanus, prince from 135-106, is distinguished as the destroyer of

the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim, and as the avenger of the wrongs done to Jerusalem by Edom, in which capacity he fulfilled the prophecy of Obadiah.

B.C.

The succession of a weak prince, Hyrcanus, to the high-priestly throne in 70 B.C., gave an opportunity to the Romans to secure a firmer hold over Judæa. An Idumæan courtier, named Antipater, brought Pompey on the scene to settle the family quarrels of the princely house. His decision was only enforced at the point of the Roman swords. The Romans besieged and took the city, and Pompey entered the Temple itself (63 B.C.). Hyrcanus remained high priest, but Antipater was left as governor of the country in the interests of Rome. Though the Sanhedrin still controlled the local affairs of the interior, Judæa was now in all but the name part of the Roman province of Syria. The civil wars which followed the murder of Julius Cæsar (44 B.C.), and of which almost every province of the Roman Empire was at one time or another the scene, resulted in Hyrcanus being swept away, and in the eventual establishment by Rome of Herod, the son of Antipater, as King of Judæa, 40 B.C. However, it took Herod three years to establish a footing in Jerusalem, where a nephew of Hyrcanus had been declared king. In 37 B.C. Herod became master of the city and the throne.

70-37

63

37

IV

HEROD THE GREAT (37-4 B.C.)

B.C.
37-4

20

4

Herod was an able ruler and a great friend of Augustus. He devoted himself to the impossible task of reconciling the Jews to his own throne and to the Roman power behind it. Zerubabel's Temple, after many vicissitudes, had at last been laid in ruins during Herod's forcible entry into his capital. In 20 B.C. the monarch began to rebuild the Temple, on a scale far surpassing in grandeur that of either of its predecessors; the work was not actually completed until A.D. 63. The monarch courted the favour of the Pharisaic party; and though he permitted and encouraged the worship of heathen gods, he yet respected the Jewish religion and customs. But his private life was marred by atrocious cruelty and murder, nor could the Jews ever forget that he was an "Idumæan upstart," though he did try to atone in their eyes for his foreign birth by marrying a daughter of the Maccabean house. Hence the political success of his administration did not prevent the Jews from welcoming his death, which occurred in 4 B.C., just after the birth of our Lord.

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°Golgotha?

Golgotha?

Gareb

Goath

Old Gate
Fish Gate
Hananel

Pool

Citadel
Sheep Gate

Ch. of H. Sepulchre

Broad Wall
Gate of Ephraim

Tower of Furnaces

Valley Gate

ZION
TEMPLE
David
Royal Palace
Tower that lieth out

Ophel

City of Tyropoeon Valley
Enrogel
(Gihon in the Valley)

Sepulchres of the Kings

Fountain Gate

Pool of Siloam

Dung Gate

Gethsemane

Mount of Olives

586.6
0 100 300 500
N
JERUSALEM
Inch - 586.6 yards

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